The Power of Giving



Accomplishing all you ever sought through Munificence

Felix Indure

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By Felix Indure

The Power of Giving: Accomplishing all you ever sought through Munificence **is a book intended to help everyone especially those professing Christian faith to reach their full potential in having what they crave in life. The book shows if you have a desire to be successful in life, to be financially independent, to be happy, to have meaningful relationships, to be satisfied in life and to have peace of mind, it all starts with giving. Life was structured in such a way that whatever we do, we are giving. If we breathe out or excrete we are giving to plants. If we talk, we are giving to God, to ourselves and other human beings. Giving is thus the only way one can achieve all he ever desired in life.**

This book is the work of non-fiction and the writer has shared his experience (as led by the Holy Spirit) working in church organizations, private organizations, interacting with the community and working in government organizations.

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Table of Contents

Introduction....1
Chapter One....5
How Giving makes one Successful....5
Chapter Two....22
How Giving Makes One Achieve Individual Goals....22
Chapter Three....34
How Giving Would Make One Become Financially Stable....34
Chapter Four....45
How Giving Would Make One to Be Happy....45
Chapter Five....59
How Giving Would Make one to be Loved....59
Chapter Six....78
How Giving Nurtures Meaningful Relationships....78
Chapter Seven....98
How Giving Contributes to Ones Health....98
Chapter Eight....109
Giving Enables One to Have a Sense of Purpose....109
Chapter Nine....116
How Giving Enables One to Make A Difference In the World....116
Chapter Ten....133

How Giving Enables One to Be Satisfied In Life 133

Chapter Eleven 143

How Giving Gives You Peace of Mind 143

Chapter Twelve 156

Giving enables one to have a long life 156

Chapter Thirteen 174

Giving Enables One to Shun Destructive Habits and Addictions 174

Chapter 14 200

Giving Enables One to Obtain God's Favour 200

Chapter 15 213

Kinds of Giving That Would Not Help You Accomplish All You Ever Sought Through Munificence 213

Bibliography 234

Introduction

All human beings crave to achieve certain milestones in their lives. These includes; being successful in whatever they do, achieving individual goals such as weight loss or muscle gain, being financially independent, being happy, being loved, having meaningful relationships, being healthy, having a sense of purpose, making a difference in the world, being satisfied in life, having peace of mind, living long, pleasing God and breaking free from injurious habits and addictions.

In chapter one of this book, I examine why most people have been working hard since childhood to get rich and I explain why only few are wealthy. I scrutinizes why a great majority have resigned to just providing basic needs to their families. The secret that makes few to be wealthy is made known.

Chapter two confirms everyone has personal objectives that he believes would make him content, satisfied and have a sense of accomplishment. The goals may vary from passing an examination, weight loss, weight gain, building some muscles, personal development, shunning a habit to being healthy. The chapter divulges how to achieve such goals with ease.

Chapter three revisits the popular notion that one must save part of his income to be financially stable. This is a noble action. If all variables are held constant, savings could make one rich if one

takes advantage of compound interests and if he subsequently acquires an income generating asset. But one may become sick and this may wipe all his savings. Ones loved ones may be in a fix and these may clean all his savings. The financial institution where one has saved the money may collapse suddenly and a substantial part of his saving is lost. Inflation may drastically reduce the purchasing power of the savings. The chapter thus elucidates how to remove the uncertainty surrounding savings and guides one to financial stability.

Chapter four concurs that all human beings would like to have positive and pleasant emotions. They all crave joy and contentment. The chapter therefore studies what triggers happiness and explains how one can maintain happiness.

Chapter five consents to everyone's desire to be loved. Love excites the sensation of happiness, positive feelings and joy. Love encompasses an assortment of powerful and constructive emotional and mental states, from the most awe-inspiring virtue or excellent habit, the innermost interpersonal fondness, to the simplest pleasure. It shows why people crave love and explains what people can do to be loved.

Chapter six illustrates why meaningful relationships are vital. It goes ahead to explain how one can attain meaningful relationships.

Chapter seven elucidates a balanced diet would require one to have food that provides him with energy, repairs the body and

worn-out tissues, improves immunity and provide both essential and minor minerals in the required quantities. Carbohydrates and fats provide energy for the body. Proteins aid growth, repair and replacement of worn-out tissues and cells. Vitamins and minerals pimp up the body's immunity as well as enabling the normal functioning of the body. The chapter goes ahead to show that a healthy person is more than food. It explains other variables that make one to be healthy.

Chapter eight defines sense of purpose as whatever one believes in. It is ones driving force, his motivation and guiding light to work towards a life he thinks would satisfy him. It then explicates what one must do to have sense of purpose.

Chapter Nine inspects the desires of persons who want to make a difference in world. It looks at few people who have made a difference in the world and explains what one should do to have an impact on the world.

Chapter ten discusses candidly how one can have a satisfied life. One should give to God by being thankful in order to have a satisfactory life. Paul told Colossians, 'let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the spirit, singing to God with **gratitude** in your hearts'. There are many opportunities to thank God. Life itself is a miracle worthy thanking him, health, food and protection are other occasions.

One should look at the blessings he has in his life and thank God for them every day.

Chapter eleven explains Peace of Mind as a situation where one is calm within himself. This is in spite of the storms that are taking place in the physical world around him; he is not perturbed or worried. The psalmist put it this way, ‘a thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.’ It goes ahead to explain how one may attain peace of mind.

Human beings have desired to live a long life. Chapter twelve therefore examines what human beings have been doing to live long and explains what they should do to live longer.

Chapter thirteen Identifies Destructive Habits and Addictions then discusses how one can avoid them and how one can pull out of the habits if he is trapped in them.

Chapter fourteen shows what one can do to be accepted by God. He is the giver of everything and being in favour with him attracts all blessings and He fulfils for you all you ever desired.

Chapter fifteen concludes this book by examining those types of giving that have only short term benefits and are no necessary as far as one wants to live a satisfied life and achieve his goals in life.

Chapter One
How Giving makes one Successful

Success is achieving what one plans to do. Every human being wants to succeed in whatever they do. They all have needs. Meeting these needs effortlessly is a measure of success. In ancient world, every boy child aspired to be the bravest soldier, amassing as many domestic animals as possible and marrying the most beautiful woman available. Those who would not attain the ideals of being brave, wealthy and having the prettiest wife strove to provide regular meals to their family. They considered it a success just to provide basic needs.

On the other hand, the girl child endeavoured to stand-out from the crowd as a virgin, hardworking, intelligent or pretty. She had to have a competitive edge to attract the wealthiest and the bravest man to marry her. Her ultimate success was being married off to an able bodied man and giving him children as he desired.

Over time, these aspirations to be successful have not changed much. It is inculcated in the mind of a child that it should work hard to develop a talent or excel academically. It is hoped that these ingredients would enable a child to have lots of money in future. Money in the present world is the answer to everything. It makes one brave and makes him wealthy. It gives one economic and political power.

Most people are working hard since childhood to get hold of money and yet only few are wealthy. A great majority have resigned to just providing basic needs to their families. What is the secret that makes few wealthy and the majority only wish to be so? It is the power of giving; one would accomplish all he ever sought through munificence

We have all at one time watched undisciplined animals feeding. The strongest and the roughest would eat to its fill. It would scare and even gore other animals to enjoy the food alone. Such an animal is always lonely and even though it thinks it towers over its peers, it exposes itself to predators if it is not domesticated animal. In one of his fables, Aesop gave reference to seven cows that always grazed jointly. A nearby lion was unable to attack such a formation and feast on any of the cows. Perhaps a good example of these is one of the National Geographic films where a head of buffaloes have managed to stave and even kill attacking lion or lions. Aesop continues to tell us that the lion managed to cause division among the cows such that, they grazed separately.

Unable to give each other company and watch over each other's shoulder, the cows were no match to the brave lion. The lion killed them one by one naturally and feasted on them. If we leave the animal realm, we have all been part or witnessed sibling rivalry. One sibling would always want the best of everything by elbowing others. This ultimately causes the sibling to be isolated and be alone, always thinking of himself and

pursuing his own gratification. These states of affairs extend to schools or academies where their future success is expected to be nurtured.

A bright student would not wish to impart his knowledge to less bright ones. A materially sufficient student would not share excess of his provisions with the less endowed ones. It becomes only me syndrome. If the bright student would have shared his knowledge with the weaker one, he would have learnt something of weakness which would have prepared him in future life. The weaker student would have learnt something of brightness and appreciated why cleverness is superior. But since the bright one did not want to share, and the weaker one was not free to associate with him, they all remained in their cocoons. They did not become pleased with the diversity of humanity.

In future, the weaker student would be the customer of the bright student. Since the bright student never understood the weaker student, he may never be in a position to come up with a good or a service that caters for the needs and the wants of the weaker student. He thus loses his customers since he never shared his information in the past and thus his counterpart did not divulge his thoughts to him. It is also common for the weak students to set the tempo of the world events since they are the majority. Not because they are not clever but many factors including poverty prevented them to excel academically. The brighter one, who was aloof, is thus forced to conform and

accept the leadership of the weak students who control the world.

Another scenario is that of a talented student who does not want to use his talent to the full. The reason would range from hating his teacher to disliking his school. Therefore he does not want the teacher or the school to bask in his glory. Worse still, is a talented person who would not develop his talent since he feels he would enrich the agent, the coach or any other middleman.

Kiprono was the fastest student I ever knew. He won most interschool races effortlessly. He had won 100 metres, 800 metres, 1500 metres, 3,000 metres, 10,000 metres and 3,000 steeplechases up to the zone level. But he listened to negative voices that corruption was rampant in our country. Someone had dissuaded him that to make it to the national team, 'he must know someone'. Since he was a son of a peasant farmer, the negative talk drained all his energy to keep trying.

In addition Kiprono fell out with the games teacher who was vocal to him that he should avoid the many female students who were thirsty for his attention. He should either prime up his athletic talent or concentrate poring books. Girls were just distracters who would divert him from his goals. The games teacher advised him that beautiful ladies were not yet born. He should persevere till he was rich from his talent or job and his eyes would be opened to see beautiful ladies he had never known.

Kiprono became disgusted with the games teacher that he decided to 'punish' the teacher. He enjoyed fame and was flattered when girls kept hankering for him. To punish the games teacher, he feigned injury and was thus unable to participate in the inter-schools National trial races he had qualified. He went against his entire games teacher's advice. He did not concentrate on his studies, believing somehow he would be like the legendary Kipchoge Keino, being rich and famous. He invited all manner of ladies to his grass thatched hut at night and fornicated freely.

As if the stars had stopped shinning on him, Kiprono was expelled from school. He had impregnated a female student. The school rules did not allow such conduct. Kiprono joined the village and the village was not lenient on him. According to the village regulations, he was forced to marry the lady he had impregnated. His elderly father was only glad that his son would then take his mantle as the leader of his family; he paid the bride price, amounting to twelve mature cows and a bull. His father was illiterate and though he dutifully sent his children to school, he had no strict attachment to education. That is how Kiprono left school and started family life.

After very many years, almost a decade and a half, Kiprono would watch on the local community television, his four classmates having become international superstars. The television was donated by the area member of parliament and was installed in a tea collection centre hall. The hall was a

beehive of activities for the better part of the morning when villagers brought the tea leaves they had plucked from their small scale farms. The tea leaves were weighed and then loaded to stand-by Lorries ready to be ferried to the tea factory. In the evening, the hall was empty thus men met there to watch the television as they whiled away their evening before joining their families.

The classmates Kiprono saw on television actually trailed him in any race. They were never fast as he was and it was always doubtful if they would make it even to the national stage. But there they were, holding gold medals in 800 metres, 1500 metres, 5,000 metres and 3,000 steeplechases. Tears found their way freely down Kiprono's cheeks. Almost all male were shedding tears of joy to behold their tribesmen excelling in international athletics. But Kiprono was shedding different type of tears altogether, tears of shame and tears of envy. But no one noticed, everyone was happy, with tears in their eyes.

That night, Kiprono did not sleep, he resolved to wake up very early in the morning and start training. He wanted to be a marathon gold medallist. He fulfilled his wish to wake up very early but the training never went as he planned. His poor lifestyle over a decade had taken toll on him. His muscles failed to co-ordinate and the sickness he had feigned one time to avoid running actually came to him. He had to return home limping.

Kiprono is not an athlete, rich or famous as he had wished since he never discovered the secret lay in giving. He did not want to make his school celebrated in athletics. He did not want to make his games master to be a renowned coach. He feared making his future coaches or middlemen men rich. But he liked to receive premature fame from female students who praised his talent. By giving fame to his school, he could have invited scouts who could have head hunted him and propelled his talent. By giving to his games master the privilege of becoming a successful coach, he could have opened his doors since the networks the games master would have created would have been beneficial to him. By being ready to allow his future coach and middlemen to benefit for a limited time from his talent, he would have rose to be an international icon who could hire and fire a coach at will. But since Kiprono feared giving, his talent was buried forever.

A part from School, one would like be successful in his career and choosing a marriage mate. Abraham's servant prayed that God may make him successful in choosing a wife for Isaac. Abraham even blessed him that the LORD whom he had walked before Him faithfully would send his angel to make his journey a success and get a wife for Isaac. Most analysts agree choosing a marriage partner also determines ones future success. In proverbs, it is said the husband of the model wife was respected at the city gate, where he took his seat among elders of the land.

Logically human beings respect rich people and even seek favours from them. Therefore, there is no doubt the husband of the model wife was respected since he was rich. But he is rich because he chose a giving partner! She speaks with wisdom and faithfully instructs all she meets. Few people would give liberally faithful advice. In fact advice is nowadays sold as what is termed as consultation fees. In addition, one can monetize his content on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and other social media. A part from using data and paying for adverts, Social media services are free. But many persons are out there to sell you information about monetizing your content and even creating content for you at a cost, clearly depicting that the giving spirit is alien to most folks.

If we return to the account of the model wife, it says she gives time to her children that they wake up when they are older to praise her. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. She does well to her husband all days of her life. The model wife is a busy woman. But she ensures she watches over the affairs of her household and has time for her children. She has worked so hard that she has enough to extend her provisions to the poor and the needy. She lacks nothing; she does not fear the future. She does good to her husband.

The model wife has a fundamental secret, the power of giving. First she gives to herself by saving so that she does not fear the future. Secondly she gives by doing well to her husband. Thirdly

she gives by being there for her children, taking care of her household affairs and treating her maid servants well. Fourthly, she gives to the poor and the needy in her community. And fifthly, she gives by speaking in wisdom and instructing all faithfully.

Her giving spirit has resulted in her having the best marriage as her husband trusts her. She also has good will among her customers as her businesses thrive. She has hope and does not fear the future as her savings keep growing. This has given her new energy and it is written she has girded her loins with energy. She has obtained Gods favour, her husband praises her, her children praise her. Her husband sits among elders. All she wished to have, she got it through Munificence.

To be successful one should realise that giving involves giving to God, giving to oneself and giving to those that surround him.

Giving to God is a requisite to makes one Successful

Giving to God is obeying his command as written in the Bible or as portrayed by nature. It is because Abraham obeyed God and did everything He required of him, keeping His commands, His decree and His instructions that all nations of world are blessed through him. Abraham did not have a Bible and learned of God through nature and interacting with Him.

Even though the whole earth is God's, He considers those who obey Him as His treasured possessions. Obeying God

automatically attracted prosperity. The psalmist was clear that a person who obeys God was like a tree planted by streams of water, which yielded its fruits in the right season. And whose leaf did not wither, whatever he did, prospered.

Notice that the psalmist has drawn our attention that obeying God does not mean living blissfully all time. There are times of drought, when most plants leaves whither. But the one obeying God has God (or river) as his source of life giving water. He is never bogged down by worldly problems. And in the right season he brings forth fruit, everything he does prospers.

If Kiprono had obeyed his games master by keeping a healthy distance from girls and devoting his time reading or running, he would be obeying God. All authorities exist because God put them in place. One does not have to read the Bible to understand that. He has just to watch nature and discern it like Abraham. That is why even the richest and famous pay taxes. They obey their governments. By failing to obey God, Kiprono was headed for failure.

Had he obeyed, he would have known there are times people have to pass through unproductive stages. This is comparable to drought time where plants wither. This stage for him was the school life, and probably when a middle man or coach would be preparing him to be a professional athlete. At the proper time, he would have been a celebrated world class athlete, rubbing shoulders with elite athletes and world leaders.

One does not have to profess verbally that he obeys God. But rather living by his principles whether one knows Him or not, would lead to success. God is a God of order and discipline. At least the Facebook founder or the Microsoft founder have never professed publicly or attributed their work to God. But it is on record they spent quite a number of hours sometimes forgoing sleep and a number of meals to come up with the famous application and software respectively. Such discipline is only exercised by persons acknowledging God without knowing.

God sends rain and sunshine to the wicked and the righteous. This means that even if one does not verbally acknowledge Him as Christians do or other religions do, living by his principles is what matters. Those knowing and those who do not know God would be blessed equally by obeying His laws, whether they know they are obeying the laws or not, Gods laws are universal. Only few people are ready to live a disciplined life. Only few people are ready to put in the hours, fasting and losing sleep. That is why prosperity remains a preserve of few who are giving to God. The majority want quick prosperity akin to rubbing Aladdin's magic lamp and things come to pass.

Like Kiprono, he did not want that discipline of avoiding his female class mates waiting for 'the beautiful ones to be born', as his games master had put it. His indiscipline, becoming unconcerned with school work, and forfeiting athletic training was disobeying God's laws. God's people should never be lazy, God's people should avoid sexual immorality and God's people

should be concerned with details of whatever they are doing. That is only when they can become successful.

Giving to oneself is a requisite to makes one Successful

Our body was made to move. Our muscles need constant moving to remain strong and toned up. Our brain was made to learn forever. It needs to be exercised by learning. The very reason we have challenges is that we have a brain to solve them. Nothing about human body is static, all cells are being replaced as worn-out and dead ones are expelled.

Similarly, the world around us keeps changing. It could take days in the past to share information; it takes seconds nowadays to share the same information. The challenges of the present world are not the same compare to that of the previous world. Yet everyone would agree no natural law has changed. The force of gravity is still the way it was, the percentage oxygen in the air is still the way it was, if it has changed slightly in some areas, then a disaster has been witnessed. All developments like mobile telephony and internet have just been making the maximum use of natural laws.

One therefore has to give to himself by staying a breast with the changing world. This is by learning. One should endeavour to learn both formally and informally. While learning one should know the laws have been held constant, but the world including us is changing. The law that said do not murder or do not commit adultery is constant in the present world as it was in the

ancient world. It does not matter that the ancient world did not have internet, aeroplanes or vehicles, all laws have been held constant. All beneficial development have occurred when the benefit of natural laws have been exploited.

Imagine using any software like Microsoft Word and you command it to copy and it deletes or you tell it to paste and it saves, that is when you would appreciate the importance of laws. You give to yourself by loving the laws of nature. Obeying them is giving to God. Loving them, appreciating them and using them are giving to oneself.

You understand the brain has to learn forever. That is a natural law. How do you love the law? How do you appreciate the law? How are you using the law? By learning regularly you are utilizing it. If you appreciate the law you would be successful. For instance, traditionally people invested in shares, land and buildings. Nowadays people are investing in software or monetizing their contents through existing software. Traditionally books have been hardcover copies; currently you can read or listen to a book on your mobile phone.

By giving to your brain, you develop intellectual property that would make you successful when conditions become favourable, like we saw above, a tree giving fruits in its season. By making your muscles strong you are helping your heart and the brain. Workouts are thus a way of giving to oneself. Giving is often painful especially if one does not see an instant reward.

But those who know you can achieve all you ever sought by giving would do so even when it is painful.

Let us go back to Kiprono's account. He failed to give to himself by staying clear of fake fame. He failed to give to himself by learning zealously and by training and participating in organized races dutifully. He failed to give to himself by obeying God's law, avoiding fornication. In the end, he became unsuccessful in whatever he wished.

Giving to others is a requisite to make one Successful

Man is a social animal, he cannot live in isolation. Even the famous Robinson Crusoe who lived on an island alone after being ship wrecked yearned for a day he would join the other humanity.

In Kiprono's account, he had an opportunity to give to his school, to give to his games master, and to give to his future coach by giving the fame or paying them money. He became mean and did not want anybody to benefit from his talent. In the end his talent was useless to him.

Jesus parable of the bags of gold illustrates suitably how giving makes one successful. He told us of a man going on a journey entrusting portions of his wealth to his servants. He gave one five bags of gold. He gave the second one two bags of gold and he gave the third one a bag of gold. He was categorical that he

gave them the bags according to their ability, meaning he expected them to utilize them in some way.

The servant who got five bags of gold traded with the gold and got five bags more. The one who received two bags did likewise and got two bags more. But the one who was given one bag reasoned that his master was unjust and cruel. Therefore, there was no need giving him anything back more than one bag. He dug a hole and hid the bag

When the master returned, he called the servants to give accounts of the gold he given them. The one who received five bags returned ten. The one who received two returned four bags and the one, who received one bag, returned one bag. Interestingly the master allowed the servant who returned the ten bags to own the ten bags of gold and the one who returned four bags to own the four bags. The one who returned one bag ended up having nothing as it was given to the one with ten bags.

The servants did not in their wildest dream think they would actually own the gold. But because they freely gave to their master returns on gold, they became successful. They would all have hidden the gold in the ground. Or they would have kept the profit, but they freely gave it to their master. Kiprono would have freely given his games master, coach or school; perhaps he would have been the youngest world record holder. But he lost the chance by not giving to others.

Microsoft software and social media like Facebook were given free on introduction. The founders were people who gave their talents freely to the world. They were on record saying the software and the application would remain free. They built a very large fan base and user base. But to their surprise, just like the servants who traded with gold not expecting anything in return as payment, conditions have become favourable for the software inventers to cash on them. Microsoft requires corporations to pay annual licence like people are known to pay for anti-viruses and Facebook has skimmed its clientele and can cash on public figures and celebrities.

Giving to others without expecting something is like casting ones money in a river, after many days one would find it doubled. This is because; this is natural giving and is in harmony with God's law. He would repay you back beyond your wildest expectations. Businesses that have been giving their clients value for money and quality products and services would benefit in future in terms of customer loyalty and referrals. A businessmen man that has been giving smiles to his customers freely, assisting them and explaining objectively aspects of a product or a service would always get repeat purchases and referrals.

Successful business do not look at unscrupulous quick profits conning their customers, but they look for long term customer base that would keep the business alive for generations. Any book that became a best seller, any film that became an instant

hit, any comedy or work of art that was loved; the owner gave his soul to such work. He gave the community his whole heart, they loved it and that contributed to his success.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Genesis 24: 7, 14-61
Proverbs 31: 10-31
Psalms 1:1-3
Matthew 25:14-29
Romans 1:20

Chapter Two
How Giving Makes One Achieve Individual Goals

Everyone has personal objectives that he believes would make him content, satisfied and have a sense of accomplishment. The goals may vary from passing an examination, weight loss, weight gain, building some muscles, personal development, shunning a habit to being healthy. For one to attain individual Goals, he must give to God, himself and other persons.

Giving to God to Achieve Individual Goals

One of the proverbs advises that we should submit all our ways to God and he would make our paths straight. For example, if the goal is passing examination, popular opinion would tell one to think and tell himself repeatedly he is passing the exams till he believes it. If it is weight loss/gain, one has to think and meditate on it till he believes he is losing/gaining weight. He should do so similarly when he wants to build muscles, wants to develop personally and wants to shun a bad habit. While it is not bad to think positively and assure oneself you can do something, such popular advice is defective.

That is the counsel that makes one burn with fire and gets motivated when listening to it but the fire dies out immediately he tries acting on it to reach his goal. In his parable of the rich fool, Jesus narrates of a man who had an ample harvest that he

had nowhere to store the excess. He reasoned that he would pull down the smaller store and build a larger one to store the grain for many years. Then he would take life easy, eat drink and merry. But God said to him, 'you fool! This very night your life would be demanded from you. Then who would get what you have prepared for yourself?' Jesus concluded that it was how it always happened to whoever stored up things for themselves on earth but was not rich towards God.

Personal goals require one to submit his plans to God. This is because the goals ultimately are additive to ones success. The personal goals are the goals that add up to complete his general success. They may have hidden dangers; therefore committing them to God enables one to remove these dangers, and invites God to help one personally.

Like for an examination, he would send the Holy Spirit to remind one what to read. For weight loss/weight gain He would protect you from injury and organ damage. In building some muscles, He would give you the resilient to press on without resorting to supplements or drugs. In personal development he would guide you so that you benefit from it. In shunning a bad habit, he would inculcate your love for Him so that you do not go back to the habit, and to being healthy he would maintain and sustain you.

In the Bible we read a tale of king Asa who relied on king of Aram to help him fight his wars despite God having helped him

defeat mightier enemies like the Cushites and Libyans. He forgot that the eyes of God were roving throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts were fully committed to him. It is thus easy to use other injurious means to achieve personal goal if we do not commit them to God. It is usually wise to give them to God and he would help us fulfil them beyond our expectation.

Giving to oneself to Achieve Individual Goals

If one is intent on passing the examination, he should be aware that our brain was created to accumulate information forever. Imagine if Adam and Eve had not sinned, we could be living forever. We could be learning forever. The capacity of the brain to learn is limitless. It is thus a disservice to the brain if one is not feeding it learning materials he expects to replicate in an examination. By giving the brain constantly the knowledge one wants to learn, it would absorb and retain the information.

I was at one time trying to teach mathematics to my daughter and she was always dispirited and discouraged. I am a slow learner myself and my wife hates maths. My daughter always continually told me maths was hard and boring. But I constantly told her maths was the only subject you don't have to read so much once you grasp the concepts. You will go and create answers in the examination room. But the girl gave me quite some trouble.

My flowerbed has a variety of flowers which I know of their characteristics and use. To end the trouble my daughter was

causing me, I suggested that she should munch and swallow a whole leaf of a bitter Aloe Vera flower or wake up every day dutifully we attempt three sums jointly. To my surprise, she munched and swallowed a whole Aloe Vera leaf! I was astonished! I expected she would choose waking up early everyday to consuming a bitter leaf. Then I saw the logic. Eating the bitter leaf was one time act and working up every day was a continuous performance. Her body had decided that she would rather suffer once than suffer continuously. I left her quite alarmed and disturbed.

After three days, I approached her again and suggested if she wakes up every day and we tackle five sums, I would give her a cup of yogurt, few cookies and her favourite mango juice. She accepted without hesitation. I honoured my part giving her every day a cup of yogurt, few cookies and mango juice. She dutifully woke up and we attempted five sums. After three months I could see she was enjoying the whole arrangement. Her score in school shot up from 40% to 90%. I was astounded. But over time I realised since she regularly and willingly gave her brain the needed exercise, the brain grew strong and gave back the results. Thanks for the cup of yogurt, few cookies and mango juice that awakened her willingness.

When ones goal is to lose weight, he has to understand what causes weight gain. There are many factors ranging from hereditary factors to eating lots of carbohydrates. Let me ignore other factors and concentrate on eating carbohydrates. Most

fast foods are delicious and contain lots of carbohydrates. Unfortunately, fast foods are so versatile. They can be taken as breakfast, a snack, lunch and supper. They are irresistible.

Many unscrupulous business men have used the plight to gain economically. They have come up with slim belts, slim teas and other onetime weight reduction gimmicks. They specify one does not need to change ones diet, does not need to exercise and does not need to take any other drugs. Their stipulation is so appealing. Whether it works or not, let's not forget the fundamentals; our body was created to move, man is an omnivorous animal and man is a persevering animal.

Since our body was created to move, give it as much movement as possible. If one likes watching television, he can do so riding a stationary bicycle. One should endeavour to give his body at least 30 minutes exercise for three days in a week. If one likes to give his body carbohydrates, he should increase the protein portion. This makes him fuller for long and reduces craving for fast foods as protein take longer to be digested as compared to carbohydrates. The body should also be given the enduring tests like fasting intermittently.

Fasting intermittently can be in the form of going without food for 8 or twelve hours and drinking clean water as necessary or having all meals but forgoing rich foods, foods that contain sugar or have been processed, fermented drinks and alcohol. One would eat simple foods. For instance John the Baptist ate

only wild honey and locusts and Daniel avoided meat, alcohol and fine foods. Perhaps he ate only unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Giving the body what it needs; movement, eating more of proteins, fruits and vegetables as well as fasting intermittently would help one to reduce body weight than any other method available.

If one wants to gain weight, filling the mind with hope and positive thoughts would work wonders. Giving the mind positive thoughts staves away anxiety and stress. This reduces the sugar and fats that are burned to cope with the energy needs due to anxiety. The extra blood sugar and fat is thus saved to make one grow fat. Similarly one should give the body ample rest and sleep while eating moderately a balanced diet. Like when losing weight, one should move.

As I said before our body was created to move, if ones personal goal is to create some muscles. He must give the body liberal energy building exercises. We have various energy building exercise that varies from person to person and his body status. God had told man he had to sweat in order to earn his bread, naturally, the work man did could build the muscles. But as human beings moved towards specialization, some occupation entailed less movement that physical exercise had to be invented for such jobs.

If one wanted to develop himself personally, he must give his brain food for the thought. He must read widely, he should interact with people he admires; he should attend seminars, workshops and formal classes.

While most persons would only look at the financial aspect of self-development only, self development demands time, sacrifice or perseverance and willingness to learn. These are some of the items one has to give to experience the magic of giving in self-development.

If one has to shun a habit. He must be willing to give. Poor habits develop since people are generally not givers. Giving is the thorniest action to any man yet it should be seamlessly ingrained in his everyday living.

Look at smoking for instance. How did one start it? Was it to conform to peer pressure, to please ones buddies? Was it an outlet to stress or a problem? Was it for fun or make you look cool like adverts portray?

If one started smoking due to peer pressure or to gratify his buddies it visibly shows one is not a giver! One had nothing to give. One did not believe in himself. Since one had nothing to give and did not believe in himself, like a flag, he would follow the wind so as not to be ostracized. That fear of being eschewed by his buddies for not smoking is a pointer one did not have anything to give. If he had something to give, his peers

would fear losing him. Thus they would retain him in their circles even if he did not smoke!

What if one started smoking as an outlet to stress or a problem? Let me single out a work related problem like an angry manager. If one resorted to negative surviving mechanism like smoking due to work related problem, it indicates one who does not want to give a solution. David was one person who faced an angry boss, King Saul.

But throughout his strictures, David gave willingly what he could bestow. David came face to face with death when he was almost pinned on the wall with a spear by Saul. He was placed in the battle front as an in-experienced soldier by Saul in hope he would be killed. But he played the harp faithfully to pacify an evil possessed Saul. He fought Saul's wars honestly that he was loved by most of Saul's soldiers. Giving facilitated David to remain sane till he was given the very kingdom King Saul was intent on denying him.

What if one started smoking for fun or makes oneself look cool like adverts portray? It still confirms one is not a giver. One could have fun like Mr. Bean or Charlie Chaplin without saying a word. The two remained themselves by not aping some advert and they have really given much to the world. The grandest mark of being cool is having peace of mind and being at peace with oneself. It is not dangling a cigarette stick between ones fingers when one feels like jumping out of his skin due to

problems that surround him. It is not trying to gain peoples approval when one is unsure of himself.

There is always something you can give out that would prevent you from smoking. You could give God praise and worship. Since our body is His temple, to please him, you would shirk smoking. Then you would not be smoking since you are a giver. Your rational and sane body that you could have hidden under smoking, you would be giving it to your creator in praise and worship.

What about if your individual goal was to stay healthy? You must be a giver. You need to give your body adequate sleep. You need to give your body sufficient physical exercises and workouts. You let your body benefit from natural air and sunshine. Give your body generous amount of time to have a diet with proper nutritional requirements. Giving has the power to make one reach his health goal.

Giving to others to Achieve Individual Goals

Giving to others would enable one to attain his goals. For instance one aiming at passing an examination would make this artless if he shared his school work and discussed it with others. He would get a different perspective of the subject and the information would be written in his mind like indelible ink. It would be like trading. He would go into a discussion with only five points, but would obtain five more to have a choice of ten.

In weight loss/weight gain goal, other than thinking one is losing weight and meditating on it to believe his thoughts, one would do well if he sought to help others lose/gain weight. There is a television that ran a program to help plus size women to lose weight. The initiator of the program was herself a plus size woman. At the end of six months, the lady who would have lost more weight would be rewarded with a prize.

The program consisted of the ladies visiting the television studio in the evening after work and carrying out cardiovascular workouts for one hour supervised by a workout trainer. The initiator of the exercise had tried all ways before to lose weight but to no avail. She was contemplating going for liposuction to remove the excess fat when an idea occurred to her she could invite plus size ladies and help them lose weight. She read books that encouraged her to use ketogenic diet as a means of losing weight. Other recommended a low carbohydrates diet, lots of protein and vitamins and water diet with one hour cardiovascular workout every day. She decided to pursue the later. She invited ladies through the television advert and was overwhelmed with the response. Fifty women showed up. She had expected none or just handful.

Since she was rich, she sponsored the whole exercise. She explained to the participants the rules of the losing weight program, which they called, 'lean doable' were: each participant should drink at least seven glasses of clean water per day, she should eat low carbohydrate diet, she should eat plenty of

proteins preferably plant protein and she should eat plenty of green leafy vegetables and fruits. They were each to drive to the television studio after work and they would carry out a one hour live televised workout.

They all agreed as they were fraught to lose weight. The don'ts of the exercise were to use less or no sugar and avoid carbonated drinks. No one was to smoke or drink alcohol during the six months period.

The sponsor of the lean doable program joined it to motivate the ladies. The program started off clumsily as the ladies found it herculean to work out continuously for just ten minutes. They breathed heavily and were helpless like a walrus on sand. The trainer was forced to give them one minute break after every ten minutes. They were all sweating profusely like people who had been rained on. Their workout attires were soaked in sweat.

It was hilarious watching them. But none gave up. Perhaps the live televised program spurred them on, or perhaps they had the determination to finish the program. Maybe the prize motivated them. It was not clear why they stayed put when they were as clumsy as a cow on ice.

After two months, they were all moving seamlessly with the trainer aping each and every of his moves like experts. The program was no longer hilarious but entertaining. I guess men were glued on the screen to ogle at how full asses oscillated with each of their movement. The movements the trainer called

pelvic thrust and pelvic swing were the mother of all the entertainment, the ladies swung their behinds as if intent on discarding them, leaving male viewers salivating immorally.

At the end of six months all the ladies had shed substantial weight and they were fit and agile, the sponsor of the program was the second run-up. She had managed to shed weight, a goal that had eluded her for a long time, simply because she decided to give to others.

For any goal, there is a way you can give to others and this helps you reach the goal. For instance in building some muscles, one could be a trainer. In personal development, one could be a mentor or volunteer to take up leadership roles at work, church or community. In shunning a bad habit one could obtain more knowledge on the bad habit then try to help others drop it, this would force him to walk the talk and thus he would drop the habit himself. If the goal is to be healthy, one could write a book or blog on healthy recipes, workouts, having adequate sleep and to prove how beneficial his writing are, he would be forced to live to what he is teaching and he would become healthy.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

1 Samuel 16:23
2 Chronicles 16:7-9
Proverbs 3:5, 6
Luke 12:13-21

Chapter Three
How Giving Would Make One Become Financially Stable

Everyone wants to be financially stable. The earliest account of written work that guided people to be financially independent was the work of King Solomon. Though before Solomon, when King David wanted to build a temple for God, God refused and said since David had been a man of war, he would prefer a peaceful King to build the temple. David thus groomed his son by saving money regularly towards temple construction.

King Solomon later emphasized the importance of saving when he encouraged anyone who wanted to be financially stable to learn from ants. They gathered food during summer and stored it in readiness for the winter. In the last chapter of proverbs, King Solomon talks about the model wife. When you read about the model wife you came across phrases like; she wakes up before the sun rises and prepares breakfast for her household including her maid servants. She girds her loins with strength. She knits her own clothes.

She considers land, buys it from her own earnings and plants a vineyard. She does not fear the future. Her children praise her. Her husband praises her. Her husband is known in the gates of the city. And she opens her hands and gives to the poor. And notably, there is a phrase that says, beauty fades but a woman who fears God would be honoured. Becoming financially stable

has three aspects; giving to God, giving to self and giving to others.

Giving to God to attain Financial Stability

God told his chosen people that the poor people would always be there in the land. He commanded them to be open handed towards the poor and the needy. He told them to be generous to them and do so without a grudging heart. Then he would bless them in all their work and in everything they put their hands to do. King Solomon later repeated this when he said, 'when you give to the poor, it is like lending to God, and God would repay you back' –GNB.

God is the owner of silver and gold. He is the one who has put in place all laws including laws that govern money and wealth. For one to be financially stable, he must give to God. We give to God by obeying his laws. God encourages his people to work hard. He is emphatic that wealth is a preserve of few. He questions why fools should have money in hand to buy wisdom, when they don't understand it.

The reason why not all people can become financially stable is how they treat money. There is a meme that was going round recently on social media that if you give the poor some money, he comes back with an iphone. If the same money was given to the rich, he comes back with double the money. This agrees with a law God has given that says the wise saves his money but the poor is soon parted with his money. Another similar

meme was about clothing the poor wear. Surprisingly, the poor wore expensively and the rich wore modestly. The poor were striving to look rich and the rich were striving to look ordinary. King Solomon had commented on this when he said there was a person that pretends to be rich when he is poor and there is a person that looks poor when he is rich.

God has also counselled those who want to be financially stable to love wisdom, He cautions that a companion of prostitutes would squander his wealth. One should not spend his strength on women and prolonged drinking of alcoholic beverages. One should not be gluttonous. He would grow poor. One should eat and drink for energy and body health, not for drunkenness and gluttonousness.

Another way to give to God is considering money as a tool not a god. God warns that whoever loves money would never have enough. A friend of mine, who is constantly in debt, got some good commission after selling a house for a client. He considered the money too little. He went and partied with prostitutes till he was penniless. When I asked why he would not save the money, he said it was too little and it was better off spending than saving. He expected one time he would get huge commission and build a house, buy a car and invest. A part from parting with his money as quickly as he got it, he loved and worshipped it.

He was taking what belongs to God and giving it to money. Such a person would never be financially stable. By contrast the model woman is said to put her trust in God and not on her beauty that fades. She is said to be generous and gives to the poor and needy. By giving to God, God has given her a responsible husband; he has allowed her savings to grow. He has guided her to purchase and invest in land. He has made her fear no future, meaning He has made her financially stable.

Clason (1926) come up with a realistic and coherent way of applying King Solomon's proverb, 'learn from the ants'. He enumerated the seven principles towards financial independence and the first principle was, give to oneself first. He argued that when we earn an income, we give our money to other people in exchange of services and commodities. We forget we are the ones who toiled to earn the money. He stipulated that before we give anybody our money, we must give ourselves at least 10% of every income we earn. The money should be stashed somewhere, where it earns compound interest.

In theory, this sounds good and plausible. But the fact is no one has ever become rich by saving. Saving is just deferred expenditure. Something that cushions one from the uncertain future like winter, where the ants cannot get food as the earth is frozen hence they eat what they saved. If all variables are held constant, savings could make one rich if the saving grew and one acquired an income generating asset. But one may become

sick and this may wipe all his savings. Ones loved ones may be in a fix and these may dab all his savings. The financial institution where one has saved the money may collapse suddenly and a substantial part of his saving gets lost. Inflation my drastically reduce the purchasing power of the savings.

Giving to God would therefore remove the uncertainty surrounding savings. He would multiply the savings miraculously in ways alien to man; like the way Elisha multiplied the oil in a small jar of a widow who sold it, paid her creditors and remained with sufficient money to make her rich. If God is pleased with someone, he would make him rich from nowhere or use the most ordinary means one has never thought possible to make him rich. God may keep sickness at the bay and other hidden dangers to allow ones savings to grow. God would direct one to buy an income generating asset with his savings that would make him rich. Giving to God is the most important step towards financial stability.

Isaac became wealthy because God was with him. He planted crops and reaped a hundred fold, because God blessed him. He became rich and his wealth continued to grow until he became wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants. Similarly since Solomon sought to give God first by seeking wisdom and desiring to rule fairly, God rewarded him with wealth and long life. God is clear-cut that with Him are riches and honour, enduring wealth and prosperity

Giving to oneself to attain Financial Stability

In the account of the model wife, she gives to herself. She wakes up before the sun rises. One of my biology teachers used to say before the sun rises there is a lot of ozone air in the atmosphere. He asserted that if one woke up early and inhaled this air, he would be active the whole day as it had strengthening and stress relieving properties. I have never verified his assertion. But personally waking before the sun rose made me active the whole day, the day was as good as wasted anytime I woke after the sun had risen. I would be clumsy the whole day, or I could be bothered by a hazy mind, or a slight headache. Therefore the model wife gave to herself by having a head start in her daily routine.

She additionally, gave to herself by saving money. By all standards she was rich, her husband was rich. She could comfortably buy dresses for her household. But she saved on buying clothes by knitting her own household clothes. The money she could have given the cloth sellers, she paid to herself. She saved so aggressively that the account says she did not fear the future; just like ants store food in the summer and thus they were not afraid of the winter. When I discussed giving to God by obeying his commands, it was clear spending all ones money on prostitutes was foolish. Spending all money that one earns is foolish also, since you are giving all the money to others (Clason 1926). First give yourself part of it by saving, imitate the ants.

Moreover, the model wife gives to herself by obtaining all information she could before making an investment. The Bible is emphatic that fools disdain knowledge and instruction, but the wise keeps learning about wisdom. By being wise, we are told that the model wife considers land. This means she is painstaking and meticulous before she arrives at a decision. She might have gleaned this information informally. But in our present world, it would require Google search, consulting experts in the field, attending workshops and seminars, reading books and registering for short courses.

Furthermore, the model woman gives power to herself. A part from being a merchant, she invests in the land she has carefully purchased. What Sydney Sheldon referred to as Location, location and location in one of her novels, 'Stars Shine Down'. Land is virtually useless if the location is inaccessible; the area does not have security or can benefit from other social amenities like water supply, banking services and electricity supply. Having bought suitable land, the model wife invests it into an income generating venture. She plants a vineyard. Notice that she bought the land with her own money without her husband's assistance.

Giving to others to attain Financial Stability

From the model wife story, she gives to her household. She has maid servants who could prepare breakfast and take care of her children. But she is the one who prepares breakfast and leads in

taking care of her children. Though she has paid servants, she gives to them by leading them in their chores.

She also gives by praising and encouraging her children and her husband. We are told her children rise and praise her. Children learn from parents. Before they praised her, she must have praised them. Before her husband praised her, she must have given him something exceptional.

The model wife gives to the poor and the less endowed persons in her society. When we looked at giving to God, we saw that giving to the poor is like lending to God, he would surely repay one back. Is that not the reason why the model wife is rich? Is that not the reason why his husband is known in her City? No doubt the model wife is accomplishing all she ever sought through munificence.

The real power in getting rich is through giving. Yes giving anything. It may be a smile, it may be advice, it may be a talent, whatever one can get to give, he should give it willingly without grudges. Everyone has something to give.

You may have substantial savings, but it is those smiles you give to your customers that will make your business grow, otherwise you may lose all your money. You may be full of advice, giving freely and enriching other people's life. Over time you could compile your advice into a book, or create videos of it and monetize your advice on social media. What you gave freely one time is what could make you rich when the conditions

are favourable. In the first chapter I mentioned Kiprono. If he had freely given his athletic talent to his school, made the school's games master profit from it and not hoarded his talent, he could be famous and rich, rubbing his shoulders constantly with elites like Lionel Messi, Uasin Bolt, Roman Reigns and a host of world leaders.

Social Medias like Facebook and Twitter were at one time free. The founders exerted their effort to freely give to the community something at no cost. Bill Gates once sold personal computers with free pre-installed Microsoft software. Presently, if Facebook and Twitter became a paid application, it could still retain a substantial number of users. The latest versions of Microsoft software are currently subscribed annually just like one would buy anti-viruses. What would make Social media and Microsoft software owners to continue being rich? It is because they gave freely and when conditions became favourable, they could sale what they gave freely and the masses would buy since they appreciate the product.

Another fascinating business model is that of Jumia, Jiji and Killmall. These websites allow sellers to advertise their products freely. Since Websites monetize their content depending on the number of visitors viewing their content, your guess is as good as mine, the Idea of Jumia, Jiji and Killmall is brilliant! First they have given to sellers to advertise for free. Second they get paid when buyers flock to view the products on display. I am not sure

if Amazon.com and Alibaba.com have the same model, but the grandest idea is, find something to give.

Businesses introducing a new product would give free samples or price the product as cheaply as they can so that they just break even. When the customer base has grown and the usefulness of the product is manifest, they would then sell the product at a high price. Unless the product is of luxurious appeal like electronic gadgets, at the introductory stage, the product would be lowly priced and even be free.

A product is given freely or cheaply since that is the way of building future sells. A product is priced expensively if the seller has managed to convince the buyer it gives them something extraordinary. Whether the product is expensive or cheap, the underlying principle is giving. Giving honestly, willingly without grudges is what makes one wealthy, makes business continue existing profitably and make one attain financial freedom or stability.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Genesis 25:11
Deuteronomy 15: 11
1 kings 3:5-10
1 Kings 5:3
Proverbs 6:6-11
Proverbs 13:7

Proverbs 17:16
Proverbs 19:17
Proverbs 29:3
Proverbs 31:3, 6
Proverbs 31:10-31
Ecclesiastes 5:10
2 kings 4:1-7

Chapter Four
How Giving Would Make One to Be Happy

All human beings would like to have positive and pleasant emotions. They all crave joy and contentment. When Leah kept bearing children for Jacob herself and through her maid servants she was so happy and was sure women would call her happy. She named a son Zilpah bore Asher to illustrate this. Happiness to women could be brought about by child bearing. The psalmist agreed with these when he sang that God, '...settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children'. Women are happy when they give birth to children to please their husbands and to contribute to the community.

Children in the past eased family workload and served as warriors to protect a community. Presently children contribute to the development of the world. They find and head corporations, they manage business dynamics, they take over governments and implement their policies. This gives happiness to the mother because she first gave the world that bundle of joy. When children grow up wise, become wealthy and successfully a mother's joy knows no bounds. We all know the effort the mother put in bringing up that child, from the time it was helpless to the time he became an adult. Giving makes mothers happy as the Bible says, 'May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave birth to you be joyful!'

Anyone living in a community or the neighbourhood where his neighbours are jealousy or are warmongers will never be happy. This is since when he amasses some little wealth, it is stolen by force. If he raises some stock, they are stolen or poisoned. If he grows some crops, envious neighbours would destroy them at will. War loving neighbours would be constantly fighting a peace loving neighbour over farm boundary and destroying his peace of mind. However, since most parts of the world are peaceful, the above vices crop into the workplace. The workplace becomes a war zone, colleagues may slander others, and a well deserving person may lose the promotion he worked hard for due to jealousy, nepotism or tribalism. War, jealousy, envy and covetousness take away what rightfully belongs to others. They result to sadness.

On the other hand peace and love is giving out an enabling environment to others. This brings happiness. When you allow others to thrive and reach their potential, you are giving out. They will be happy you will be happy. You are creating unity among people and by extension, availability of food. We are told when King Solomon was ruling a united Israel, the people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. It is the enabling environment that King Solomon gave to his subjects that ensured they were happy and made him happy. To be happy, one must give to God, give to Himself and give out peace to others and enable them reach their potential.

Giving to God makes one Happy

Happiness can be a result of just watching nature and simple things like beholding a plant grow. While Jonah was downcast, God provided a leafy plant and made it grow over Jonah to give shade for his head..., and Jonah was very happy about the plant. Johan was happy because he was giving praise unconsciously to the maker of that plant. He was appreciating that He skilful made the plant. Appreciating nature would give us happiness since we are giving praise to God for wonderfully creating all that exists

In one of God's law, if a man had recently married, he would not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he was free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he had married. In the same way, if a man was engaged, he was prohibited to join war least he is killed and someone else married his fiancée.

You can clearly see God crafted laws to make his people happy and as I said before obeying his command is beneficial. That is why Paul said that one of the fruit of the Holy Spirit was joy. God's word is good news that makes all people rejoice greatly. In fact Jeremiah attested to it when he said after God's words came, he ate them and they were joy and was his hearts delight. Isaiah was of the same opinion when he said God had increased the joy of His people.

The Psalmist knew God makes one Joyful when he prayed, 'remember me, Lord, when you show favour to your people, come to my aid when you save them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your people.' He knew he could get happy if he gave to God, that is why he adds, 'and join your inheritance in giving praise. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the sea resound, and all that is in it. The lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song, I praise him.'

The Psalmist continues to re-assert that the precepts of God are right, giving joy to the heart. His commands are radiant, giving light to the eyes. He makes known to him the path of life and filled him with joy in his presence and eternal pleasures were at His right hand. He implored God to let all who take refuge in him be glad and sing for joy and rejoice in his name.

Esther and the Jews were persons that were given the privilege to be happy, joyful and glad since they had given to God. They had fasted for three days when Haman had threatened to exterminate them. God saved them and made them happy.

Ezra had shown desire to re-build God's temple and the Israelite's wall. God was pleased that he gave to him in worship that he changed the attitude of the King of Assyria. He released the Israelites from exile and they celebrated with joy.

Happiness could also be a result of certainty. It is common for one to be anxious or even sad when faced with uncertainty either because he does not understand a problem or he has inadequate information. One therefore, becomes happy from understanding a problem, a situation or what one is reading. In Nehemiah, we read that, 'then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they then understood the words that had been made known to them'.

Closely related to certainty, one would be Happy if he escaped danger or was delivered from a problem that he faced. They Jews were to be murdered since Haman hated them. In a turn of events, Haman was murdered and the Jews escaped the jaws of death. It is written in the book of Esther that they held joyous celebration and it was a time of happiness and joy, gladness and honour. Every province and in every city, there was joy and gladness among Jews, with feasting and celebrating. Most of us have watched accused person in courts of law shedding tears of joy for being acquitted of wrong doing. They are happy since they escaped prison sentence. Escaping any impending danger makes one happy.

Having beheld that certainty and escaping a danger results to happiness, it is prudent to know happiness is a gift that God gives to his people. God Himself promises that 'He would fill our mouth with laughter and our lips with shouts of joy'. The psalmist also added, 'but let all who take refuge in you be glad;

let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.'

Notice that the psalmist talks of protection; it is only God that can bring certainty in one's life and protect him from hidden dangers. We saw previously that neighbours and work mates may stalk one and bring sadness on him. By protecting one and bringing certainty in his life from malicious neighbours and work mates, one is made happy. If one has taken refuge in God, he should make an effort to be happy, look at what He created and be happy with the details. Trust Him; sing songs of praise to Him. By giving to Him in this way, God would fill ones mouth with laughter and ones lips with shouts of joy.

The advantage of being happy constantly is that we can pray to God to make us happy. Jesus encouraged his followers to pray for anything and be happy when he said, 'until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete'.

One is happy, if he has hope in the future. One may be going through the greatest of the storms in life, but hope and God's comfort would make him happy. This gives assurance to one that thought sometimes he would grieve, but his grief would turn to joy. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.

Giving to oneself makes one Happy

For one to be constantly happy, he has to find joy in apparently nothing. One should eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil. There is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they are alive. When times are good or bad one should be happy.

One must resolve to just be happy. King Solomon was able to advise that we should always be happy as a happy heart makes the face cheerful. Zechariah was also insistent that God's people should be happy even when fasting. He was categorical that, 'the fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months would become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah'. In the same wavelength, Paul advised Christians to rejoice always.

One should be determined to be happy, King Solomon commended the enjoyment of life, because he was sure there was nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. The joy was to accompany them in their toil all the days of life God had given them under the sun. James was of the same view when he directed that Christians should consider it pure joy whenever they face trials of any kind.

Another aspect of happiness is when we see athletes shedding tears of triumph, when candidates jump with joy for passing examinations and when any other human being is happy a challenge or an obstacle is over. Happiness comes from victory

or overcoming an obstacle or a challenge. We have an account when men were returning home after David had killed the philistine; the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tumbrels and lyres. David also sang, 'the king rejoices in your strength, LORD'.

The effort one gives out to train for a game, to prepare for examination and overcome a life challenge, if well coordinated, it brings happiness. The human body was made to move. The human brain was made to think and acquire knowledge forever. Most of the time we do not know the capability of our body to move, similarly we do not know the capacity our brain can extend to. That is why it is always a pleasant surprise for athletes and candidates that they excelled.

What they fail to understand is that, they gave the body and the brain a lot of training. Giving is attaining what one ever sought. Then with happiness they would sing like David, 'How great is his joy in the victories you give. Surely you have granted me unending blessings and made me glad with the joy of your presence. You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.'

Happiness can be derived from watching other people succeed. In kings, we read a narration where King Solomon celebrated before God for fourteen days. At the end of the festival, the priests sent the people away. They blessed the king and they

went home joyful and glad in heart for all the good things God had done for His servant David and His people Israel. A modern day event where other people's success gives someone happiness is the football world cup. Happiness envelopes all the citizens of the Country that won the world cup and any other countries that support them. Virtually in every field of life one would have fans being happy for him at excelling in life. But this happiness is clearly portrayed in sports, music industry and with politicians. Since they decide to give adoration to their icon, they became happy.

Happiness is also directly proportional to accomplishing a goal. In Ezra, we read the people of Israel - the Priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles - celebrated the dedication of the house of God with Joy. The morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy, when God completed making the earth. One would be happy for completing basic education, completing high school, completing a college course, getting a job, starting a business and marrying. Other goals like building a house, breaking a world record or entering the Guinness world of records would make someone happy.

Accomplishing a goal makes one happy. But it should be understood the goal is only one side of the coin. A person must have given a lot to realize a simple goal. It is always the sum total of what he gave out. Take for instance the bringing up of a child. There are sleepless nights the father spent thinking how he would provide for the child's needs.

The torture he went through coming up with the best disciplinary method that would not dishearten his child. And not forgetting how he racked his brains to come up with apt and timely advice. By giving to himself by learning and applying to be a good father, he modelled a wise son. His efforts of giving to himself, probably not drinking to be a good example to his son, stretching his brain to advice his son faithfully paid off great dividends. As King Solomon said, 'a wise son brings joy to his father'. He would be happy for giving to himself. No giving is enjoyable, but its fruits are happiness.

Giving to others makes one Happy

Information is a vital commodity. All human organizations are run on information and ability to communicate understandably. Share prices would come tumbling down just because of a small piece of misleading information. The impact of information was first felt when human beings were building the tower of Babel. God confused them so that they talked in differing languages. Their inability to comprehend each other made them to abandon the tower building project.

Those that understood each other coalesced together and moved away from the tower each going in different directions. Thus happiness can be found just by passing on information dexterously. Be it in a family setting, among friends, at workplace, political rallies and any other organization; communicating deftly is a source of happiness. Good

communicators put in a lot of work to pass that uplifting, motivating or informative message to others. It makes them happy to achieve that goal - A person finds joy in giving an apt reply - and how good is a timely word!

Therefore, happiness is attained when one is able to give timely advice and direction whenever others need it. The queen of Sheba visited King Solomon and marvelled at his wisdom. She remarked at how happy the Israelites and the king's officials might have been. Standing continually before the king to hear his wisdom was a cause to make them happy and their king happy. In fact Solomon indirectly agreed with her when he advised, 'Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice'.

The sincere advice a friend gives to his buddies is what makes him happy. God is termed as a happy God since He gives earnest counsel to his people. The psalmist retold this when he said, 'you make known to me the path of life; you fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.'

Up to this point happiness can be found by giving something to others that is not money! There is quite a debate in the whole world if money brings happiness. Some people contend that money does not bring happiness while others are of the contrary view. The truth is money brings happiness if you know happiness is gotten from giving, and happiness is ones resolution to be happy.

If you are negative and unhappy and mean, no amount of money in the whole world would make you happy. One has to purpose himself to be happy. Margaret Thatcher once said that the Good Samaritan Jesus talked about is remembered as a good neighbour because he had money. He had provisions to clean the injured Jew's wounds, he had a donkey to carry him to the dispensary and he had money to foot the injured Jew's bill!

Suppose the Samaritan was poor, he could have had pity and good intentions on the fallen Jew. And most likely, like the other Jews he would have continued with his journey and left the injured Jew alone. Money gave him power to give and act. Giving selflessly made him happy, and for thousands of years, his story is being retold as an example of a good neighbour. Happiness results from having money (wealth and possessions) and being given the ability to enjoy them.

Another giving that brings happiness is being just to others. When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous. A wise son would deal fairly with those he interacts with. He would be happy, his community would be happy, his parents would be happy. The world needs wise sons since, 'when the righteous prosper, the city rejoices, when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy'. The simple reason for this is that justice results to happiness. Wise sons will ensure justice is given to all fairly, wicked people would deny justice. That is why people are happy when the wicked are no more. 'The psalmist agreed with this when he sang; "May those who delight in my vindication shout

for joy and gladness; may they always say, 'the LORD be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant' ".

By giving to others willingly without expecting to receive anything in return, we would be happy. Servants who traded with their master's gold and increased it were invited to share their master's happiness. In fact Jesus himself said there is more joy in giving than receiving.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Psalms 113:9
Proverbs 23:25
1 kings 4:20
Jonah 4:6
Deuteronomy 20:7; 24:5
Galatians 5:22, 23
Jeremiah 15:16
Psalms 106:4; 96:11, 12; 19:8; 149:5
Esther 8:16, 17
Ezra 6:22
Nehemiah 8:12
Job 8:21
Psalms 28:7
James 1:2
Ecclesiastes 8:15
Proverbs 15:13
Zechariah 8:19

Philippians 4:4
1 Samuel 18:6
Psalms 21:1-3
1 Kings 8:66
Ezra 6:16
Job 38:7
Proverbs 10:1; 15:23
2 Chronicles 9:7
Proverbs 27:9
Psalms 16:11
Ecclesiastes 5:19; 6:2
Psalms 17:2

Chapter Five
How Giving Would Make one to be Loved

Everyone desires to be loved. Love excites the sensation of happiness positive feelings and joy. Love encompasses an assortment of powerful and constructive emotional and mental states, from the most awe-inspiring virtue or excellent habit, the innermost interpersonal affection, to the simplest delight. People crave to be loved due to the following benefits.

Love prolongs live. God declared to the Israelites that if they walked in obedience to him and kept his decrees and commands as David did, He would give them Long life. He had earlier on told the Israelites shortly after they left Egypt that their children and their grandchildren after them were to love God. And as long as they loved God, they would enjoy long life.

It is proven statistically that love prolongs life. Married people live long than the unmarried ones. The unmarried person is likely to be reckless with his life and would take stupid risks which would kill him. He would drive his car faster than necessary and is likely to be promiscuous than his married counterpart. He would try risky ventures like walking on a rope without any care. That is why, guerrilla wars use children and youth to fight as this group is thoughtless and does not care whether it lives or dies so long as it has been properly radicalized.

On the other hand, a person in love or married would always bring his loved one into the picture before undertaking anything chancy. Since he wants to be there for his mate and children, he would avoid risky behaviour that could kill him. It is said if two can lie down together, they could keep warm. Love releases the feel good hormones and dispels anxiety and stress. Thus people in love are not likely to be depressed or get lifestyle diseases like type two diabetes, hypertension and other heart diseases. Absence of these diseases prolongs their life.

It should be appreciated love is purely about giving. One loves God by keeping his commands and decrees. He is giving to God by obeying him. In turn, God rewards him with long life. Love birds give each other their time, gifts, appreciation, smiles, laughter and tender care. This giving fills up the room that could have been taken by negative thoughts thus they have no time to be depressed or be anxious. This prolongs their life.

Love Connects human beings. Jacob and his family were considered alien citizens, but Hamor, Shechem's father wanted them to be connected. He implored Jacob by saying, 'you can settle among us; the land is open to you. Live in it and acquire property in it...intermarry with us; give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves.' Yet God did not want his people to be connected with the heathen tribes that surrounded them, He did not want them to learn bad habits. He therefore warned, 'do not intermarry with them'. 'Do not give your

daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons'. This was because marriage was love and it connected people.

The Egyptians could never share a table with the Jews, but because Joseph married an Egyptian, the two tribes connected and they could share a meal. In fact the Jews were invited to live in Egypt. Like all types of love, one has to give in order to get this love. Shechem and his folks were ready to give Jacob and his family land and freedom to own property. Joseph had to whole heartedly give his skill in facilitating Pharaoh to rule Egypt. The Egyptian toned down on their stance towards the Jews and could dine with them and even gave them land where they could stay.

In our present world, in organizations owned by a dominant tribe, family or cluster of certain persons, marrying from the dominant tribe, family or cluster, connects one. This is clearly seen in coastal regions where Arabs intermarried with the local Africans. These regions are predominantly Muslim religiously as they are still connected to Arabian Countries. These Africans feel they belong to Arabia more than they belong to Africa. They have given up their culture to that of Arabia including religion. This is because to be loved, one ought to be a giver.

Love enables forgiveness and promotes peace. Joseph's brother had sold him as a slave. Though they re-united and Joseph treated them well, they had no peace in their hearts. When Joseph's father died, they were scared stiff that if Joseph

had a grudge against them, that was the right time he would revenge. They send a messenger to Joseph requesting him to forgive them for the wrongs they had committed in treating him badly. Because Joseph loved them, the message moved him to tears. Later when they came to Joseph and offered to be his slaves, Joseph told them they should not be afraid. He added that he was not in the place of God. He told them that they intended to harm him, but God deliberated it for good to accomplish what he was doing then, to save many lives.

God had warned Adam and Eve that if they ate the fruit from the tree of good knowledge and bad, they would die. When they ate it, God could not bend his rules to let them live, that very day they were dead to God. But moved by love, he forgave them instantaneously and devised a mechanism the human race would be saved and live forever. Love moves people to forgive each other. At the time slavery was widespread, it was thought Africans were lesser human beings only qualifying to be slaves. Some people theorized that Noah had three sons. One of the son's descendants were cursed and condemned to be slaves. And Africans were the descendants of that son. But slowly and steadily the world realised we are all human and moved by love they stamped out slavery.

Many nations and tribes warring against each other came to realise they were in fact annihilating their brothers and sisters. They buried the hatchet and reconciled because of love. When anyone mentions anywhere blood is thicker than water, they are

actually saying love covers a multitude of wrongdoing. It requires a lot of giving for the oppressed party to forgive the oppressor. The oppressor also needs a lot of giving to stop oppressing the other party as he has power to do what he wants. The oppressed like Joseph, must give up a grudge and give love. The oppressor must give up aloofness and give love.

Love enables human being to have sex. Ordinarily, two people have to get acquainted with each other marry before they can have sex. Abraham Maslow, in his hierarchy of needs, named sex as the basic need for every human being. Therefore, all human beings would crave to be loved as they need sex. Sex involves giving one's body willingly to the person you love so that he can be intoxicated and enraptured with love. Paul was even forced to counsel Christians that a wife does not have control over her body but the husband does, likewise the husband does not have control over his body but the wife does. These required couples to whole heartedly give to each other.

Since sex could result into children, it required those engaging in it to be duly married so that they could give by adequately providing for their children. Any other sex does not involve love; therefore the element of giving is absent – it is pay and take sex. Take fornication for example, the parties may be experimenting to know what sex feels like. In any laboratory, we have the specimen that is being consumed and the one that acts as control to compare results. Therefore in fornication one does not give at all, he gives something to be used and retains something

to compare. When giving is half-heatedly, the whole purpose of giving flops.

Take another kind of sex like prostitution. One party receives money, the other party sex. Sex is also metered such that the money one is willing to pay is what will determine the duration of sex. No giving is involved but buying and selling.

Love is an excellent source of motivation. Most successful people when interviewed would always say their wives, mothers or husbands were the source of their motivation. Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite was motivated to get circumcised just because he loved Dinah, Jacob's daughter. Gideon's daughter was motivated to die a virgin because she loved her dad. The best rehabilitation for persons who have been abusing alcohol and drugs is to inculcate the love of God in them. The best way to reform robbers, murderer and prostitutes is to infuse the love of God in them. Many people have left destructive ways and dangerous habits because of the love they had for God. Like the psalmist they unanimously agree that, 'Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.'

Love as a motivation entails giving. If one is addicted to cigarettes, alcohol or hard drugs like heroine, he is a slave to those substances. If one is an incorrigible adulterer or prostitute, murderer, robber and any other ghastly habits, he is a slave to those vices. He gives the addiction or the habit a lot of his time,

money, health, energy and emotion. Shunning the addiction or habit would require a change in giving. He would have to give God praise, worship, prayer and learning about Him. Fortunately, giving to God is not expensive as giving to habits and substances. Everyone is equipped to give to God the way he is; those endowed with material possession and those without can equally give to God.

Love keeps one healthy and prevents diseases. Loving and being loved releases the feel good hormones in the body. Additionally, it helps one to relax and sleep well. Sleeping well enables the body to purge toxins from it and replace worn out cells. Ample sleep also improves sugar metabolism and the welfare of type 2 diabetics, reduces depression, supports a healthy immune system, reduces body inflammation and improves emotions and social interactions. It is like each day one has a set of new white blood cells ready to combat foreign bodies. A set of renewed cells and the feel good sensation increases the immune system. A strong immune system keeps one healthy and diseases at the bay.

Love encourages justice, ends nepotism, favouritism and tribalism. God gave laws like one should not follow a crowd in doing wrong. One should not pervert justice by siding with the crowd. He added that one should not deny justice to poor people in their lawsuits, show favouritism to the great but be fair to all. When love is lacking, people pervert justice, show partiality and accept bribes; this is because these actions

involve taking away or receiving. Love involves giving. It is because of nepotism that someone would take something that the other rightly deserves and give it to his family members. It is because of favouritism that people seek favours from the rich and ignore the wise poor. Equally it is because of favouritism that justice is denied to the poor and the rich exonerated of any wrong doing.

Tribalism would exist when human beings do not love other human beings for who they are. Certain tribes would not want outsiders to buy land and settle near them or among them. Tribalism would discourage intermarrying among tribes. Tribalism would not support businesses or would in fact sabotage businesses of other tribes. Tribalism would ensure the government positions are shared among tribes only. Tribalism would lead to civil strife and wars. Tribalism would encourage injustice, nepotism and favouritism

On the other hand, love covers a multitude of sins and recognises diversity of the human race. It is because of love someone would forgo living a comfortable life to go and serve some persons in slums in developing countries. It is because of love that tribes would inter-marry, end civil war and strife. It is because of love that justice would prevail and there would be no favouritism. This is because love is giving. You give other persons you are not related to what they deserve whether they are rich or poor. If they deserve justice, you give them. If they

deserve jobs you give them. Anything they deserve you give them.

Love invites blessings. In biblical times, we are told God loved Abraham and He thus blessed him. Isaac loved Esau and was intent on blessing him. Rebecca loved Jacob and she made sure he took away Esau's blessings. If one loves God, He reciprocates and blesses the skies above, the deep springs below and everything he does. If one loves his neighbour, he would be blessed with peace and prosperity as social ills like nepotism, favouritism and tribalism would be unknown.

Loves enables one to find a confidant. One needs to share disturbing things and circumstances with those he can trust. Joseph shared his dreams of being a ruler over his brothers and parents. Since no love existed between him and his brothers, they hated and resented him. However in another account, we read of a man that had a disturbing dream telling a friend that a round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into Midianite camp. It struck the tent with such force that the tent overturned and collapsed. His friend responded that it was nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God had given the Midianite and the whole camp into Gideon's hand.

We also look at Delilah who cried to Samson that if he really loved her, he would have told her the secret of his enormous power. Samson finally bowed to pressure at her nagging as it was expected a wife and a husband should love each other and

confide into each other. He told her the secret. Unfortunately, she was not a good confidant. It is love that you have towards someone that would impel you to share your inner hearts feelings with them.

Love depicts the image of the creator. The Bible explains vividly and concisely when it says that "God is Love". We were created in the image of God therefore we all need to be loved and to love in return. God is a giver since love is giving. He created the Sun that is the main source of energy for all living things on earth. Plants create food using the sun's energy. Animals eat the food plants created get energy to grow and move.

God freely sends rain that waters the earth and enables the water circle to be in place. Animals and plants use this water to stay alive. God created the animals and all sceneries for man to enjoy. He has given man a wild range of things to take pleasure in. By giving man and all other creatures life, that was love, since love is giving. If we love our neighbours, we are giving.

Love protects one from danger. Psalm 91 is resounding that whoever loves God can always be sure he is protected. He can confidently say God is his refuge and his fortress. He would save him from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. One would not fear the terror of night nor the arrow that flies by day. He would not fear the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. No harm

would overtake him and no disaster would come near his tent, for he would command his angels to guard him in all his ways.

Yes, love protects. I witnessed a guy that almost became a victim of mob justice. A lady had lost her handbag. The thief, running away from a vicious crowd of youths who were baying for his blood, threw the bag at the guy. Just by reflex action, the guy caught the bag and the thief started strolling away as if nothing had happened. Before the guy could understand what was going on, a crowd had surrounded him ready to beat him to pulp.

But since most of the mob knew the guy to be decent helpful successful businessman, they hesitated in beating him up and even restrained some eager youths that wanted to snip off his life. Then one person pointed at the real thief scaling a wall fence at a safe distance. It is the love people had for the businessman that was clutching the stolen handbag that saved his life.

In the Bible, Saul wanted to kill David. Naturally he expected his daughter Michal, who was David's wife to side with him. Perhaps because blood is thicker than water and her daughter knew David had become a family enemy. But since Michal loved David, he protected him by signalling to him to run away before her father could send the assassins. It was due to love that David was saved.

Therefore for someone to be loved and love others, he must be a giver. He should first give to God by obeying His statutes. God is love, by giving to God, he would reflect His image and would find it unproblematic loving other human beings.

Paul said love is patient, thus willing to give other people time to develop themselves. Love is kind; it is willing to share with others where they lack something. Love does not boast, is not proud, does not dishonour others, is not self seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. This implies love does not rejoice in taking or receiving but rejoices in giving.

To bring this point home, Paul adds that love does not delight in evil but rejoices with truth. It is evil that wants to take away what rightly belongs to others. It is love that gives justice. And to sum up what we have discussed above as to why people crave love, Paul says, love always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres.

Giving to God makes one to be loved

We give to God if we are willing to be taught and be protected by him. There is a folk story that the hen and hawk were friends. One day the hen borrowed the hawk's razor blade to trim its chicks' nails. But unfortunately the hen misplaced the razor blade. The hawk demanded the hen return his blade within a stipulated time. When the hen was unable to do so, the hawk gave her an ultimatum. The hawk said that until the hen finds his blade, he would be eating one of his chicks daily. The story

concludes; that is the reason the hen scratches the ground now and then, because it is still looking for the blade. The story is silly; but a hen can teach us a lot.

When the hawk or other flying predators want to grab a hen's chicks, it would sound a warning and all chicks gather inside the hen's wings and they are safe. The chick that would disobey this is always taken by the predator. Similarly, at night or any other time when it is cold, the hen would protect the chicks under its wing to keep them warm. The hen would protect the chicks under its wing from rain. Jesus used the hen's analogy to show how God is willing to teach and protect us but like a defiant chick, we are not willing. Giving to God is finding refuge under his wing.

It is difficult nowadays to perceive if someone loves you for real. God's protection would shield you. He will give you spiritual eyes to see if someone is a Joker or the relationship you are entering is true love. Allowing God to teach you and protect you is the only sure way to be loved for real.

Apart from being malleable allowing God to teach, direct and protect one, one must love God with all ones heart and with all his soul and must not lean on his own understanding. In all his ways he must submit to Him and he would make his paths straight. Rehema was such a woman that trusted God. And God protected her loved one from danger. Otherwise she would have lost one who loves her. She had left her child sleeping and she

reasoned that since the child slept for three hours during the day, she would use two hours weeding her kitchen garden.

Weeding must have been enjoyable since when she looked at her watch, three hours had already elapsed. She panicked! She picked her hoe and rushed to see the child. She wondered why it was unusually quiet that day. If it woke up and no one was around, it usually cried aloud. Rushing to her bedroom, her eyes met a sizeable python encircling the child. She was shocked. It took few seconds for the shock to wear off. Her first thought was to call a neighbour to kill the reptile. Then she saw, there was no way the reptile could be hit without injuring the child.

The child was looking at her smiling, oblivious of the danger. Then another thought crossed her mind. She went to the sitting room to pray to get hold of her nerves. She decided she would tackle the python herself. She would die with her child. As she was praying, a neighbour's cat that seldom enters her house passed her swiftly before she could chase it away and entered the bedroom.

She added on her prayer that the cat should not disturb the reptile so that her kid remained safe. She took the hoe and braced herself for the war of wars. When she reached the bedroom, the child was safe in bed. The cat had killed the reptile and dragged it on the floor. It was busy munching the reptile's head. It raised its head momentarily to see who was intruding, their eyes met, it cried once, 'meow' and then continued with its

meal. Tears of joy flowed down Rehema's Cheeks as if taps of water had been let open. She grabbed her child rushed outside, called neighbours to witness a spectacle.

In the calamity that befell Rehema, she could not depend on her own understanding. God heard her prayer and saved her from all the trouble. Finding someone who loves you is one area you cannot depend on your understanding. For instance, Delilah claimed to Love Samson, but she had other ulterior motives. Most people may not be seeking love.

There is a tale in which a Hotel in Malindi was attacked by terrorists. The woman who masterminded the attack had been apparently married to a Kenyan and that disguised her intention. She lived silently and had no dramas for three years. When she had indentified the target to bomb, she reliably instructed her accomplices and oversaw the bombing. Before anyone could connect the bombing with her, she had fled the country.

It is only God who can protect one from such dangers of scheming spouses who are not after love but sinister motives. Like he protected Rehema's child unexpectedly, he would use supernatural powers to draw one to a real lover. Give to God without leaning on your own understanding and he would make you be loved.

One should also give to God by loving His neighbour as he loves himself. Everyone who loves himself would dress properly, keep his body clean and nourish himself with the best meals

available. He would not do anything injurious to himself like lying to himself, cheating himself or battering himself. He would also take time to relax himself, do workouts and keep learning. John pertinently said, 'whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

In love relationship one that loves you would not push you, for instance registering your assets in his or her name. That would be akin to Delilah nagging Samson to reveal his divine secret. He would not press you to do what you do not like. He would be considerate at what he does to you. It would be something he can do to himself. One who wishes to be loved should be ready to deal with his/her spouse the way he would deal with oneself.

Among the Ten Commandments, majority were about ones relation with others; honour your father and mother, you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony against your neighbour and you shall not covet your neighbour's property. This shows how God placed emphasis on loving ones neighbour. One should give to God by obeying all these commands. He would attract one that obeys them and their love would endure.

Giving to oneself makes one to be loved

Jesus advised that one should love his neighbour as he loves himself. To love one must first love oneself. One must give to

himself by staying healthy and clean physically. One must keep their body and clothing clean. One must wash hands after visiting washrooms and before handling or eating meals. One must eat nourishing diet and have adequate physical workouts. Human refuse and other waste must be disposed off, properly in accordance to laws prevailing in a given area. Ones compound and house should stand out as neat and organized.

One gives to himself by thinking on uplifting thoughts. He should fill his mind with positive thoughts just like Paul said; 'whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things'.

One gives to himself by avoiding practises that defile his body like sexual immorality, lying and unclean speech. Sexual immorality spreads venereal diseases; it is the main cause of broken relationships and heartbreaks. Sexual immorality destroys ones relationship with God. Lying and unclean speech saps ones energy and the liar has a task of remembering every lie and creating new ones so that he does not entangle himself. It also makes one to be disliked by God.

One gives to himself by improving himself to be loveable. For example, one would cultivate the fruits of the spirit. One would concentrate on beautifying the inner beauty. One would shun destructive habits like spending all of his income on alcohol and

women, abusing drugs and other substances. One would also try to learn what God requires of him.

Giving to others makes one to be loved

When one gives to others selflessly without a guarantee of receiving any benefit, he attracts love. Ruth left her family and decided to take care of her mother-in-law who was then a widow and childless. She was throwing away a chance of getting married as Naomi had no son and even if she re-married and bore a son, she had to wait for a long time! Her selflessness attracted Boaz who married her and she was loved.

Rebecca was the first lady at the well when she met mere strangers. She did not see it an arduous task to give drinking water to the stranger and water his camels; she offered to water camels before she was even asked. It can be gleaned from the account that she was hard working since she needed to fetch a lot of gallons of water to water the camels. She finished watering and no other lady was in the vicinity to the well. Meaning she was self-driven and was not put under peer pressure to tone down her hard work by other ladies.

Rebecca's selfless giving made her to be loved. She unexpectedly got a husband.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Deuteronomy 30:19, 20
Genesis 34:9, 10; 41:44-46; 3:13-19; 9:2-22
1 Corinthians 7:3-5
Genesis 34:24
Psalms 97:10
Exodus 23:2
Isaiah 55:1-2
Genesis 27:4-10; 37:1-11
Judges 7:13-15; 16:4-18
1 john 4:8, 20
1 Samuel 19:11-16
Matthew 23:37
Deuteronomy 11:13
Proverbs 3:5, 6
Philippians 4:8
1 Corinthians 6:18
Ruth 2:11-13
Genesis 24:15-67

Chapter Six
How Giving Nurtures Meaningful Relationships

Human beings crave meaningful relationship since they foster feelings of happiness. In chapter four we saw happiness involves feeling joyful and contented. We also discussed in some detail that happiness is facilitated by giving. Relationships involve two or more persons. It can only be sustained if both parties are giving to each other. Giving may be time, a smile, material possession, advice and virtually anything else.

Relationships also involve God. God is described as a happy God. Therefore for one to be truly happy, he must have a relationship with God. It is written in the Bible that when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship with God, she came to test Solomon with hard questions. We are also informed Jesus Christ had the closest relationship with God. Paul instructs Christians in their relationship with one another, they should have the mindset of Jesus.

Jesus had meaningful relationship with anybody. He humbly gave by washing his disciples' feet. He willingly gave by teaching about God and sharing heavenly treasures we cannot fathom, we are only left visualizing on them. He healed the sick

and released the demon possessed from bondage. He fed the hungry and willingly died so that the whole mankind could have a chance to live forever.

What makes most relationship to be fickle nowadays is because many people do not have the mindset of Jesus Christ. People have become lovers of money, are without love, are unforgiving, are slanderous, do not have self-control, are brutal and are not lovers of good. Their mindset is that of taking and receiving. They do not have a giving mindset. That is why man finds it an uphill task to have meaningful relationships. They could easily have significant relationship if they tapped the power of giving.

Meaningful relationships give a sense of security. Almost everyone knows that if they retreat within their families, clans, tribes and country, they would be in a sanctuary. This is because families are tied by blood. Clans are tied by blood and social norms. Tribes are woven together by customs and norms and citizens of a country feel a belonging due to pride.

The Egyptians felt secure with Joseph since he had married an Egyptian. Marrying one of their own made them trust him as one of their own. Saul promised David that he would marry his daughter and become his son-in-law. He wanted David to feel secure, become lax and drop his guard so that he could kill him easily. Saul was so afraid that David would take his throne; the only option was to exterminate him.

A folk legend is told of the tribal wars between the Luo and Kalenjin tribes in East Africa. The Luo had an invincible man just like Achilles or Samson. This man single handedly defeated the Kalenjin tribe and secured the Luo's. The Kalenjin noted that no spear or arrow would pierce this man, the least a spear or an arrow could do was bent. Unable to annihilate this man called Lwanda Magere, they played a Samson-Delilah trick on him.

They sought for the most beautiful Lady among the Kalenjin. They gave the woman to Lwanda Magere as a truce promising they would never fight Luos again as the woman would serve as a uniting factor between the tribes. However, they had their own sinister motive. The woman was to discover why no arrow or spear would pierce Lwanda Magere.

The lady stayed peacefully with Lwanda Magere and there were no more wars between the two tribes. Occasionally when the lady visited her parents, the elders assembled at her parents' homestead to interrogate her. She had never learnt her husband's secret. The elders realising there was nothing they could do, became patient. Many years passed and Lwanda Magere had children with his Kalenjin wife. He became secure with her and discussed things with her freely.

One day a loose stone from a hill hit Lwanda Magere's shadow and he started bleeding below the knee. He returned home and instructed his wife to rub some herbs in the wound. The wife prepared the herbs and was going to rub them on the wound

below his knee, when Lwanda Magere told her to rub the herbs on his shadow. The wife was astonished that rubbing the herbs on his shadow healed her husband.

When an opportunity came for her to visit her parents, this time she had a spring in her strides. She had news for the elders. She reliably informed them that Lwanda Magere's weakness was in his shadow. The elders detained her. She was not allowed to return to her husband. They brought together the Morans to wage war on the Luos. They instructed the young men to find Lwanda Magere's shadow and spear it.

When the Kalenjin announced war, the confident Luos answered the call and greatly defeated the Kalenjin. However, in the evening one Kalenjin Moran hidden among the rocks saw Lwanda Magere heading to his homestead alone. The sun was setting and had elongated his shadow. He shot a poisoned arrow at unsuspecting Lwanda Magere's shadow. To his relieve, Lwanda Magere stumbled and fell down. He ran to tell his kinsmen the great Luo soldier was dead.

You can clearly recognize the Kalenjin hatched a plan to make Lwanda Magere trust them before they destroyed him. As much as many relationships mirror this, people hunger after relationships where they can feel secure and trust each other.

Worthwhile relationships help one to feel independent. One has a sense of strong self, self-assurance and conviction in one's own capability. A story is told of a deaf frog that had fallen in a

deep well. The other frogs that were outside the well kept yelling at the frog in the well to give up and await fatality since the well was so deep. But since the fallen frog was deaf, it kept jumping higher and higher thinking its mates were encouraging it to try harder. The other frogs frantically tried to dissuade the fallen frog saying its activities would only wear it out. The deaf frog jumped even harder and eventually it jumped out of the well to the surprise of the other frogs.

The deaf frog managed to get out of the well since it thought the other frogs were encouraging it to jump harder, unaware that they were dissuading it. This shows that, if one has positive relationship, they can spur him on to do things he never thought he was capable of doing. We all want such relationship. When Gideon thought he was inferior, God saw a mighty warrior in him. We all have great potential but most people do not utilize half their potential as they have no one to urge them on.

Closely related to independence is self-esteem. This is how one values and perceives himself. It is as a result of independence since it means; one has to have assurance of oneself, one has to make decisions and assert himself, one knows his strengths, one can try challenging things, one becomes kind to himself, one believes he is valuable and good enough and one knows he deserves the best.

Healthy relationships help one to have high self-esteem. Parents that encourage one help him to face the world with

confidence. That is why Paul encouraged parents to discipline their kids lovingly so that they do not get disheartened and discouraged. Self-esteem is the very reason mentors exist to encourage promising young people.

Meaningful relationships lower levels of depression. We have seen how healthy relationships encourage independence and boost self esteem. They also make someone happy and secure. Happiness releases the feel good hormones that lower anxiety and depression. Meaningful relationships play a great role in distracting someone from brooding over events that make him anxious.

The wise men have also said, a problem shared is a problem half solved. Meaningful relationships encourage one to find confidants. Sharing a persistent problem with a trustworthy person makes one to have another angle of looking at the problem or he gets advice to solve the problem. When a pressing problem is cracked, one feels happy and cannot become depressed.

Meaningful relationships end loneliness. Cherry (2023), defines loneliness as a state of solitude or being alone, loneliness causes people to feel empty, alone, and unwanted. People who are lonely often crave human contact, but their state of mind makes it more difficult to form connections. Loneliness is a powerful feeling and it can be very painful. It is a feeling of

emptiness, isolation, feeling cut off from other humans. A lonely person becomes vulnerable and frightened.

Loneliness can be caused by feeling rejected due to appearance, race or religion. It can be caused by new environment, city or country. Loss of a parent, a marriage mate and decrease in one's circle of friends cause loneliness. Mutual misunderstanding or lack of compatibility produces uncertainty that causes isolation in marriage partners and even children.

Meaningful relationships alleviate loneliness in that; giving a smile to your friends/mate/parent, giving them a kind word relieves loneliness. Talking to your acquaintances and listening to them removes focus on ones loneliness. Relationships give an avenue of finding someone to confide into.

Having meaningful relationships spurs ones healing capability. Seeing people concerned about ones welfare boosts the feel good hormones, relieves loneliness and boosts the immune system. It also makes the sick cheerful and this promotes quick healing. Solomon in proverbs quoted that a cheerful heart is as good as medicine, and it is true, cheerful people respond positively to treatment.

Other than healing rapidly, meaningful relationships promote healthier behaviour. Persons who do not have meaningful relationships are likely to be victims of alcohol and drug abuse, have brain disorders like Alzheimer, altered brain function and cardiovascular disease and stroke. They could also be suicidal,

slow thinkers and indecisive. But meaningful relationship results to one being independent, happy and secure. This promotes healthy behaviour and he shuns destructive behaviours.

Meaningful relationship gives one a sense of purpose. A lonely person may have low esteem and is likely to consider himself as a total failure. They thus lean more on being pessimistic in life than being hopeful. On the other hand healthy relationships encourage positive outlook in a person. This makes them good performers in whatever they do; accordingly, they excel in their activities. Performing well in all they do gives them sense of purpose in life.

Having healthy relationships elongates one's life. This is because one would avoid destructive and injurious behaviour like alcohol and substance abuse. His immune system would be boosted due to release of the feel good hormones. Having hope in the future is even another reason for one to live long. And the healthy habits one assumes are beneficial to him.

Giving to God results into Meaningful Relationships

Obeying God's law is giving to Him. While families, clans, tribe and countrymen may be connected and may have an obligation to treat each other well, they may not do so to foreigners. God told the Israelites that they should not mistreat or oppress a foreigner since they had been foreigners in Egypt. He added that foreigners residing among them had to be treated as a native born Israelite. The law ensured all human beings lived

peacefully and there was no prejudice among them on any basis. That trust that existed, led to meaningful relationships.

God specified rules that guided the life of Israelites. They were never to fight for land boundaries or change a boundary established by elders. These laws ensured people lived cordially and respected each other's property. These fostered meaningful relationships.

He also stipulated laws that helped his people in the event a person grew poor or sold himself as a slave. People could grow poor due to their bad decision like spending all their money on alcohol and women. They could also grow poor due to natural and man-made calamities like drought or vandalism/war. If a person became poor and wanted to sell his land, God proposed a relative would buy it and the release it later to the man's grandchildren. If he was poor with no property, the Israelites were bound to help him. If he sold himself as a slave, the Israelites were to treat him as a labourer and give him paid work. Such laws encouraged good relationships and the furthered respect to human beings.

God put in place laws Governing morality and day to day life among neighbours. He discouraged marrying close relatives. He instructed parents to teach their children his laws on every occasion possible. He knew marrying close relatives would encourage spread of hereditary diseases and weaken the human race. Unhealthy people would not promote meaningful

relationships. The directive of parents instructing children on every occasion ensured the parents were close to children. This gave children a chance to build meaningful relationship with their parents, and as they say charity begins at home, they would be in a position build good relationship with other people in future

All Gods laws ensured his people lived in harmony with foreigners, amongst themselves, in their family and brought up obedient children. Giving to God by obeying these laws promoted meaningful relationships.

Giving to oneself results into Meaningful Relationships

One ingredient of meaningful relationships is communication. One therefore must give to himself by learning to communicate adeptly with his loved ones. Paul described it this way, 'let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone'. Human beings have the most advanced communication mechanism; they must therefore communicate in the loveliest way possible and add salt to it so that the recipient finds the words tasteful. No one is born with that capacity; he has to learn both informally and formally. For instance, there is a proverb in Swahili that says, 'Jifya moja, haliinjiki chungu', a similar proverb still in Swahili is, 'kidole kimoja hakiui chawa' and yet another similar one is, 'umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu'.

The proverbs above could be translated as; ‘One stone cannot hold a cooking pot’, ‘one finger cannot kill a louse,’ and ‘unity is strength, but isolating oneself is weakness’. When encouraging people to unite and perform a certain task, the proverbs, ‘one stone cannot hold a cooking pot,’ and ‘one finger cannot kill a louse,’ would be apposite in rural Africa. This is because people in rural areas relate to three stones holding a cooking pot. Most of them use firewood with three simple stones holding the cooking pot as fire is lit under the cooking pot. Lice are also common in rural areas and to kill a louse, one must press it between two fingers. They would easily relate to these proverbs and even smile at the orator if he uses them to add salt to his speech.

But the proverbs would look so alien in developed countries or affluent regions in Africa. Most adults, all youths and children in these regions have never seen cooking stones or lice. The most appropriate proverb for them would be, ‘Unity is strength, but isolating oneself is weakness’. They would relate to this proverb since they have seen demonstrations and strikes. They know the power of these groupings. They have also voted and they know what the majority can do.

Human beings had a very close knit relationship and decided to build a tower that would reach the heavens and remain united. But since God wanted them to spread all over the face of the world, he just touched a small bridle. He made them communicate in many languages. Unable to understand each

other, they abandoned building the tower of Babel and spread on the face of the earth. That is what communication can do in a relationship; it can make or break it! It is prudent to give to oneself by continually improving ones communication ability.

One should also give to oneself by learning God's law. Of the famous ten commandments of God, six are about human relationships with each other. One had to honour ones parents, he was not to murder, commit adultery, steal, give false testimony and covet neighbours' property. One has to give to himself by learning he does not have to obey his parents if they are telling him to break God's law. But even if his parents are evil or they mistreated him, he has an obligation to respect them. If he is successful in life, he should help his "evil" parents materially and emotionally.

One has to give himself by learning he has to love himself as he loves his neighbour, if the neighbour is successful, he does not kill him, he does not steal from him, he does not give false testimony and he does not covet his property! Would one like someone else to kill him, steal from him, give false testimony about him or covet his property? If not, he should not do so to others. If he taps the power of giving, he can actually have what the neighbour has. By obeying the five commandments above on his neighbours, he is actually giving himself peace of mind and making himself a good neighbour that attracts meaningful relationships.

Giving to others results into Meaningful Relationships

By obeying God's six commands about living with neighbours, one is giving neighbours an enabling environment to carry out their activities in peace. This encourages trust among neighbours that results to meaningful relationships.

Jesus narrates of persons who are giving to others this way, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me"

The above giving is what is common among human beings. But believe it or not, some of the long lasting relationships have been forged by giving to others especially strangers. It is like they were angels sent to test one. When one became mean, he chased his fortune away; when he was kind, he got his reward.

This kind of giving can be compared to a classical story we were told in our childhood. There were three brothers whose parents earned an income by selling firewood. The father who was the bread winner was bedridden with unknown illness. Therefore, the elder son was tasked with the responsibility of providing for the family.

His mother packed a small loaf of bread and a bottle of water and sent his child to the forest. He was to stay there the whole

day cutting trees and chopping firewood. The boy embarked on his task energetically to prove he was a man. He was sweating profusely but he was satisfied with his progress. When noon approached, he saw the need to eat his bread and drink water to sustain his working energy. No sooner had he settled down to munch his bread than a sickly looking old woman appeared by his side. She begged him for a piece of bread and drinking water.

The man looked at the small bread, the little water and shook his head sadly. He told the old woman that there wasn't enough for the two of them. He needed energy to tackle the task ahead of him. He implored the old woman to go away. The old woman heeded the young man's plea and went away.

After the man had finished his lunch, he stood up to continue his work. Unfortunately the axe handle broke and hit his leg. He could not continue to work. Then he realised the old woman must have been a cupid, how did she appear suddenly? Was she punishing him for being mean? He went home limping, it would be some days before he could resume wood chopping.

The following day the mother packed a small loaf of bread and a bottle of water for her next son. They were behind schedule with firewood requirements, so the chopping had to go on. The second son reached the woodland and continued the work where his brother had left. At noon, he un-wrapped his bread ready to eat and instantly an old gaunt woman was by his side

begging for a bite, he made a big bite at the bread, gulped water from the bottle and motioned for the old woman to go away. The woman obeyed and went away.

When the second son had finished eating his bread and drank his water, he took his axe to chop wood. But the handle broke immediately, the axe hit his leg and he had to go home. It would be days before he was well enough to chop wood again.

The following day, the mother had no option but to send his last son to chop wood. He packed a small loaf of bread and a bottle of water. She was worried they would lose customers as there was no more firewood to sell. She was also worried the fate that befell his two sons may befall the remaining one. She advised him to be careful. He nodded and left. After all he was to start chopping wood someday, the sooner the better, the boy told himself since he was prematurely being sent to start being a provider.

The boy chopped and cut trees dutifully. He was the only one remaining to fend for his family. When he had looked into his mothers eyes, he had seen pain. He prayed that God should ease their poverty. He was busy chopping, thinking and praying that he did not notice time had elapsed so fast. It was one in the afternoon. He was not hungry or his thoughts and prayers had numbed his hunger. But he resolved he would just eat his bread and drink water anyway.

As he settled to eat his bread, a faint sick looking old woman stood beside him begging for a bite of bread. He looked at the woman, felt pity for her and gave her the whole loaf and the bottle of water. The lady looked surprised and asked the boy if he was sure he wanted to give her the whole loaf with water. The boy nodded in affirmation and said the bread was not enough for two but he would be glad if the woman had it.

The woman thanked him elaborately. Suddenly she turned into a young beautiful lady, the young man realised at once he was dealing with a seraph. The lady instructed to him to chop a given tree. Within no time, he had chopped a year's supply of firewood and had a golden goose. The lady told him if anyone touched the goose or touched him when he was holding the goose, if he said 'please don't let me go' they would be stuck on the goose or onto him. If he said 'please let me go' they would be released. Then the lady disappeared. The boy went home satisfied and narrated to his folks the incident, everyone was happy they would not chop firewood for a year and this made his two brothers and father to heal faster.

At that time something was happening in the palace. The king's daughter had not talked or laughed for a month. The king decreed that any man young or old who would make her laugh or talk would marry her. To deter many suitors, the king said that whoever attempted to make her laugh and failed, he would be jailed for life. People of all races and origin, both poor and rich

flocked to the king to try their luck. She was the only child, which meant the winner was de facto king!

They all failed. The brothers of the boy with golden goose tried and they were jailed. When the boy with the golden goose was interested in trying, his parents dissuaded him but he would not give up. Finally they agreed. They wished him luck. Carrying the golden goose under his armpit, he went to the palace. By that time the king was exhausted and tired of suitors that he did not wish to see the men. He had resigned to the fact that his daughter's dumbness and sadness was something permanent. Perhaps the gods were punishing him.

The king's soldiers brought the boy carrying the goose to the king. When the king asked what he wanted and he said he wanted to make the princess talk, the king told the solders to throw the boy out of the palace. As one soldier touched the boy roughly, they boy cried, 'please don't let me go'. The soldier was stuck and looked lifeless, the king ordered another soldier to find out what was happening with the immobilised soldier, and as soon as the other soldier touched the other, the boy cried, 'please don't let me go'

Soldier after soldier in an effort to find out what was happening to their nearest colleague; they got stuck and formed a queue from the boy. The boy started to move away from the king's court and the lifeless soldiers followed him as if in a trance. The king panicked! He told his non-soldiers workers to pull the

soldiers away from the boy. As the boy kept singing, ‘please don’t let me’ the non-soldier workers were all stuck and followed the kid wherever he went like zombies.

The boy was soon running round the palace garden in circles. The king could do nothing since each and every servant of his was stuck on the boy. He hysterically gave orders for everyone to stop running but nobody heeded his command. It was like the boy took control of them. He stood hands akimbo until loud laughing attracted him. Her daughter was laughing uncontrollably over her balcony pointing at the mature men running behind a boy, following him wherever he went like robots.

The king for a moment forgot the soldiers and servants that had shocked him and smiled that her daughter could at last talk. Then he remembered the boy had come to make her daughter laugh. He thought he could now stop what he termed as non-sense and arrange a marriage between the boy and his daughter. The king ran after the boy and told him to stop. But her daughter shouted, “Dad! Do not stop him, I love that boy, let me enjoy want he is doing!” afraid her daughter would relapse again into silence, the king left the people to run around the palace for the better part of the day.

When the princess was tired of laughing nearly the whole day, she wanted to talk with the boy. The king entreated the boy to stop. The boy said, ‘please let me go’ and all the king’s soldiers

and servants fell down exhausted, not understanding what had happened. The boy married the princess. Notice that the boy did not have oratory skills like the comedians that tried to make the princess laugh and failed, he was hospitable.

Though the story entertained kids, it had some deep-seated lesson. We should help the needy. We should welcome strangers. Our kindness is what would lead us to meaningful relationship. The boy without knowing proved to be kind to an angel. The angel then prepared him to be a king having a meaningful relationship with the queen, his wife. What happens in the world mirrors that childish story. It is giving to others that results to meaningful relationship.

If we are in a position to give to others, give even if it means you give to strangers. That is why Paul said, 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing, some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it'.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

1 Kings 10:1-25
Philippians 2:5
Matthew 14:16-21
2 Timothy 3:1-5
Luke 6:18
Mark 15:44
Genesis 41:45
1 Samuel 18:17

Judges 6:12-16
Proverbs 17:22
Deuteronomy 19:14
Leviticus 25:35-55; 18:3-30
Colossians 4:6
Exodus 20:2-21
Hebrews 13:2

Chapter Seven
How Giving Contributes to Ones Health

Oxford dictionary defines health as being free from illness or injury. Health is not only being free from illness or injury, it includes having peace of mind and being free from any intoxication. Giving has the power that leads to vibrant health.

Giving to God Contributes to Ones Health

Jesus said man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. It is a necessity for a person who wants to live healthily to obey God. Obeying God is giving to Him. God is the physician of all doctors. It was God who first introduced cleanliness for instance, he required his people to dig a hole and bury their bowel movements away from their camp. He specified a period of cleansing a menstruating woman or a woman who had just given birth would pass through before she could copulate with her husband. He put in place laws that dissuaded sexual immorality which is known to spread venereal diseases, and is the leading cause of anxiety and depression. He stopped marriage between close relatives which is the cause of many defects in children. This also prevented many hereditary diseases and bodily defects.

He discouraged his servants from practising traditions and adopting beliefs of the people who did not acknowledge Him. Such people had bad practises like burning their children, eating dead and unclean animals. His people were to ensure an animal

was killed and blood drained from it before it was fit for consumption. Any animal which no blood could be drained from it was considered dead and was not fit for consumption; it was to be thrown away. Thus his people became free from diseases spread by animals like anthrax.

He provided a meditation program where his people would think positively by reciting his commands and teaching their children. It ensured his people filled their minds with clean, pure thoughts and remained mentally clean. His servants were to speak the truth. This cut back depression, anxiety and loneliness. It obliterated all lifestyle diseases.

In the modern world, one may live a healthy lifestyle, shunning substance and alcohol abuse, having plenty of exercise and eating well. But all these practises may be unable to help him avoid anxiety and depression. Those who are spiritually healthy, know that God would give them power beyond what is normal to guard their hearts and stave off anxiety and depression.

It should also be noted while one may be doing everything right, his malicious neighbours and workmates may be doing whatever they can behind scenes to bring him down. It is only spiritual health that would protect one since God promises: he would save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you would find refuge; his faithfulness would be your shield and

rampart. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

God also encourages helping the poor and the needy. He knew there is joy in giving than receiving. Other than giving to him by obeying His commands, he wanted us to give to other human beings. This raised the feel good mood in the giver. This mood increased his immune system and he stayed healthy. He encourages husband to praise their wives and never to discourage their children so that the family would be healthy.

He encouraged children to obey their parents and if they did so, he promised them long life and prosperity.

Giving to God would entail obeying his commands, and his command would make one healthy.

Giving to oneself Contributes to Ones Health

Giving to oneself would encompass slowing down and taking care of one's body. This would include mental health, physical health and emotional health.

The World Health Organization (2022) defines mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with stresses of life, appreciate their abilities, learn well, and contribute to their community. It is how someone feels about himself, how he makes choices and how he deals with stress.

Maintaining ones mental well being would require one to give to his body.

One has to organize himself. Organizing oneself gives the subconscious mind the needed preparation to help one execute his chores seamlessly without feeling the pressure to accomplish his goals. One can use the traditional 'to do list' pads or the smart gadgets applications, which have an advantage over pads as they would remind him of up-coming events. He should also learn about new methods to organise.

The human brain was created to learn forever. From childhood to old age, persons who crave healthy Growth and development should keep learning. One should read positive up-lifting material and what would enhance his career or income. The model wife in proverbs 31 was a good learner. From her income, she considered other income generating investments and invested in them. She came up with cost saving methods to reduce the family bill. A characteristic all learners should ape. Most people shun educating themselves after completing college studies. Just like our body muscles that require exercises to grow strong, the brain requires to be nourished with knowledge. Some pundits suggest that one should set aside 10% of his income to acquire additional knowledge. It is not a bad idea setting part of income for education, but for those who cannot; they should endeavour to learn informally. Apart from knowledge, one has to eat a balanced diet.

One has to watch his diet to ensure it is balanced and has the necessary nourishment which may differ from person to person. A balanced diet would require one to have food that provides him with energy, repairs the body and worn-out tissues, improve immunity and provide both essential and minor minerals in the required quantities. Carbohydrates and fats provide energy for the body. Proteins aid growth, repair and replacement of worn-out tissues and cells. Vitamins and minerals pimp up the body's immunity as well as enabling the normal functioning of the body.

Water is also an important component of diet. Most of our body is composed of water; one of my teachers compared this to water masses on earth. Greater part of the earth's surface is covered by water as compared to dry land. Water helps in digestion acting as a solvent and a major component of the enzymes; it aids excretion, and helps in regulating body temperature. Water helps diabetic persons to regulate their blood sugar.

In a balanced diet, one should consume a variety of food and ensure he has the appropriate body mass index. He can do these by eating less of the unhealthy fats (most commonly derived from animal meat and products), eat complex carbohydrates containing fibre and limit the amount of sugar and salt intake.

A part from the diet being balanced, he has to live a healthy lifestyle where he would shun alcohol and substance abuse,

promiscuity and have at least three days workouts in a week. Our bodies were made to move. Our muscles need to be stretched for us to remain fit. Regular exercise enables our body to work properly. Workouts helps the body to burn excess sugar, remove toxin from the body majorly through sweating and release of feel good hormones. The production of feel good hormones, makes one happy, relieves stress and depression.

Work-outs are classified depending on the goal of the exercise. We have strength building workouts. These work at strengthening the muscles. Muscular endurance work-outs train the muscles to have ability to be utilized for a long time. Flexibility work-out train agility in moving body parts. Cardiovascular work-outs are aimed at toning the heart and blood vessels; they are almost similar to muscle endurance workout only they test the endurance of the whole body. Total body work-outs are aimed at exercising the whole body.

Being healthy would mean a person does not abuse drugs and alcohol. Drugs are chemical substance that alters the normal functioning of the body and mind. Drug abusers have poor feeding habits that lead to nutritional deficiencies. They may also suffer from various diseases for instance lung cancer, liver cirrhosis, stomach ulcers and heart diseases. They lack concentration and thus miss their goals or cause accidents. Their judgement is impaired therefore they make incorrect decisions.

Drugs can cause one to lose consciousness, be addicted and die. Mothers taking drugs during pregnancy may give birth to underweight, premature and still-born babies. A drug addict trying to shun or missed taking his drug may exhibit the following withdrawal symptoms; sweating, trembling/shivering, sudden mood swings, irritability, headaches, stress and depression, violence and confusion.

Everyone would like to have a body free from diseases and disorders. Our body is well equipped to defend itself from diseases and disorders. Unbroken skin, antibodies, white blood cells, mucus, nose hair and tears are some of the defences. But we must give to it in ways mentioned above to enable it function properly. Giving is not easy for many people, but giving is worthy it, as the saying goes, **No Pain No Gain.**

Giving to others Contributes to Ones Health

Mental health would require one to have meaningful relationships. It would be ideal for one to have functional families, friends and confidants. One would have to give fully and selflessly to these relationships. If one is a neighbour or a friend, he has to give willingly his time, advice and help if he has the means to help.

The giving everyone would be giving in meaningful relationship makes each one feel happy and joyful. Jesus himself said there is joy in giving. And having that feel good sensation that one

assists where he can and has acquaintances that are ready to help him, assuages stress.

The family health is where every member of the family recognises the husband as the head of the family unit. Ideally, a husband must have one wife and they should be legally married. A legal marriage assures every spouse that none of them would just walk out of the marriage. Separation or divorce has to follow due process and there must be a valid reason for any of the two to be effected. Children in such marriage are also secure. In the event the parents' divorce, one would take custody of them and the other would pay their maintenance fee. This ensures they are not left in limbo.

But it is the wish of all that couples that they live together till a ripe old age. The husband should love his wife as he loves his own body. Everyone feeds and cherishes his body; he should therefore respect and honour his wife. He should support her in her ambitions; he should be her cheer leader and should always praise her. He should remember she is weaker that him, therefore handle her with knowledge and tender care.

A husband has an obligation to take care of the families material needs. He should provide basic needs such as food shelter and clothing. He should also take care of their emotional and spiritual needs. The father takes the lead in training his children. The role of the father is that of a giver, all his efforts are to give his family proper care and nutrition, by so doing, he becomes

healthy and his family would be healthy, quarrelling and delinquency in the family would have been curtailed.

The wife has the role of a good helper. In proverbs 31 which talks of a model wife, it can be gleaned that she is hardworking. She takes care of her maid servants, children and husband. She goes at great length to ensure the family has nutritious food even if she has to travel so far to bring that food. She has her own income generating ventures.

In as much as the husband has to provide everything, the model wife shows a wife's role as stabilizing factor in the family by giving. It is the giving that has endeared her husband to her, it is the giving that has made her rich such that she does not fear the future, it is the giving that makes her children appreciate her meaning they obey her. Therefore her family is healthy, she is healthy and we expect minimal conflict in such a family.

Children are required to obey their parents for a healthy family. Parents need to teach children at every opportunity. They should fulfil their emotional and spiritual needs. They should discipline them lovingly. They should not be harsh or cruel to their own children. This ensures they are healthy and they grow to be independent and esteem themselves.

If the family is healthy, they would interact with neighbours healthily. If children respect their parents, they would respect any older person as parents. If spouses communicate well, they would communicate equally well with neighbours and be

respected. In the story of the model wife in proverbs 31, we are told the husband to the model wife is known at the city's gate and sits with elders. Implying lowly persons like the gate keeper know and respect him and high persons, rulers of his community (elders) share a table with him. The giving he devoted to his family is giving him fame and perhaps a reliable source of income.

The Health of a person is also depended on ones associates and what one reads. If one has a circle of friends that do not encourage him to pursue his goals, he would stagnate in life. One has to have meaningful relationships that challenge him to reach his maximum potential.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Deuteronomy 8:3
Matthew 4:4
Leviticus 18:6-20, 22-24
Deuteronomy 23:9-14
Leviticus 12; 2-8
Deuteronomy 6:3-12
Philippians 4:7
Psalms 91:3-6
Acts 20:35

Some Hypothetical Heights , Weights And BMI		
Height	Weight	BMI = Weight/(Height*Height)
1.2	50	35
1.4	60	31
1.9	70	19
1.3	80	47
1.9	90	25
1.5	100	44
1.85	110	32
2	120	30
1.7	130	45
2.4	140	24
1.5	150	67
1.95	160	42
1.7	170	59
2.3	180	34
1.9	190	53
2.5	200	32
KEY		
UNDERWEIGHT		BELOW 18
GOOD HEALTH		18.5 - 24.9
OVERWEIGHT		25 - 29.9
OBESE		30+

Body Mass index is the ratio of one's weight divided by the square of one's height.

Chapter Eight
Giving Enables One to Have a Sense of Purpose

Ho (2023) defines sense of purpose to be whatever one believes in. It is ones driving force, his motivation and guiding light to work towards a life he thinks would satisfy him.

Giving to God enables one to have a sense of Purpose

The wise man said there was nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. That is the joy that accompany human beings in their toil all days of their life. The meaning of life is to enjoy and be glad at all times. All human beings activities make a trajectory towards being joyful and satisfied with life. Yet there are situations that disorient man and make him lack direction in this pursuit.

The pursuit for happiness and enjoyment has to be through toil. If someone understands the real meaning of life is toiling, then he is giving to God. It is God who directed that by the sweat of one's brow, one would eat ones food. Invoking this command from God, Paul counselled that the one who was unwilling to work should not eat.

This is because if one loses the desire to work, he lacks sense of purpose. A lazy and an eating person goes against Gods commands. The muscles have to be moved, the food in the body can only be used properly if one is moving. Otherwise one

invites lifestyle diseases. Partying and enjoyment should be to reward oneself of one's hard work.

The first step in everything is always the difficult one. One who lacks sense of purpose would always assume he cannot do anything. On the contrary, if he just takes the first step, God blesses him and the going gets easy. If he was afraid he could not build, he would build a house and dwell in it. If he was afraid he could not work, he would plant a vineyard and eat its fruit. He would not labour in vain, before he calls God, he would answer him while he is still speaking.

Granted life has very many disheartening events occurring at any given time. While some occur due to unforeseen and natural circumstances, others happen since people lack sense of purpose. For instance some diseases are self-induced. Drunkenness and misuse of drugs is self-inflicted. Some poverty, especially due to laziness and giving up in life is self-inflicted. And some accidents are due to man's greediness, building sub-standard infrastructure that collapse and take many lives.

But all these depressing scenes should not distract one from pursuing happiness by toiling. One should be an example to the masses how life should be lived and enjoyed. One should prove indeed by giving to God he derives a sense of purpose. People should not live dejected, if everyone is toiling to make it in life, somehow, all would live a decent life.

What makes a person giving to God have more sense of purpose in life is that, he is not alone and he is protected. God promises to keep him from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He would cover one with His wings and he would be safe in his care. He would protect and defend one. One would not fear any dangers at night or sudden attacks during the day, or plagues that strike in the dark or evil that kill in day light.

But misfortunes do happen. That is not debatable. If they afflict someone who has a sense of purpose, he would not pity himself and resign to his fate. He would still pursue his goals believing that God wants to make Himself manifest in his weakness. Paul healed people and did very great miracles and wonders. It is even said when his apron and handkerchief was taken to the sick, they immediately became healed on contact with the attires. Yet Paul had a persistent sickness he could not heal. This however, did not slow him down for he was sure, God wanted to use that weakness for a greater purpose.

Giving to God gives one the greatest sense of purpose such that nothing can slow him in his pursuits. That is why godly persons would attest; 'who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger, or poverty, or danger or death? No! In all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us'- GNB

Having sense of purpose does not mean one is certain of the future, like everyone else; one does not know what the future holds. One may be afraid and terrified of what lies ahead. Moses told Joshua countless times to be courageous and he should not melt with fear. God did the same after Moses gave up the ghost; 'have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go'. In spite of all the miracles Joshua witnessed, he was still fearful though he had strong faith. God himself had to encourage him again and again, 'do not be afraid, do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you and go up and attack. For I have delivered into your hands the king and his people, city and the land will be yours.'

Thus giving to God will make our sense of purpose certain in that when we are doubting, He would strengthen and encourage us.

Giving to oneself enables one to have a sense of Purpose

When God was encouraging Joshua as a leader to possess the land he said; 'be determined and confident, for you will be the leader of these people as they occupy this land which I promised their ancestors. Just be determined, be confident and make sure you obey the whole law that my servant Moses gave you. Do not neglect any part of it and you will succeed wherever you go. Be sure that the book of law is always read in your

worship. Study it day and night, and make sure that you obey everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.' –GNB

From the excerpt above, one can glean that to continue having sense of direction one needs someone to encourage him. Depending on the person, children can have parents cheering them on. Spouses can encourage each other, businesses would hire consultants and leaders would hire advisors. There are many unforeseen occurrences that might sidetrack one from his goal. The encouragers one has given to himself would recall him to mind to remain sane and press on. This Increases his optimism, resiliency and hope.

God also told Joshua to read the book of law day and night. He also put a vision in front of Joshua that he would rule his people. This means that for one to keep the goal in mind, he must meditate about and read all possible information on the goal. The goal should also be like a vision in front of his mind. This equips him with the necessary information he can use to make a decision when the situation demands. It also gives him the arsenals to dispel doubt if it comes cropping into his mind.

By giving to oneself by reading, encouragement and setting the goal before one's mind, one experiences joy, happiness and satisfaction. Notice the goal God had put before Joshua was that he would possess the land and rule peaceful for all days of his life. No one would defeat him. Such a picture in mind was

bound to make him joyful, happy and satisfied. He could do whatever he was directed to do with Zeal.

Giving to oneself also makes one be determined, and confident. When one does not have knowledge about something, he would always be unsure and afraid. But when he has gotten information about the goal, the reality of achieving it becomes certain and he would be determined and confident.

Giving to others enables one to have a sense of Purpose

No goal can be achieved in isolation. Other human beings are involved. For instance if a child has to have sense of purpose in passing an examination, as much as he gives to himself by allowing parents and teachers to cheer him on, he must give to them. The child has to give by obeying its parents and teachers. Spouses have to give by respecting and treating each other with respect. They have to give by endeavouring to solve all their problems between them before the sun sets. They have to give each other by willingly forgiving one another even if they have a valid reason to be bitter with the other. Businesses have to give by paying consultants and politicians and leaders have to give by paying their advisors. Ultimately having sense of purpose makes one have a feeling of greater sense of belonging in the society

God told Moses to strengthen the determination of Joshua for he was to lead God's people to the Promised Land. Job told his friends that if they were in his position, he could strengthen them

with advice and talking to comfort them. The psalmist cried to God to strengthen and save him. Isaiah lauded God since he strengthens those who were weak and tired. I have mentioned these accounts to illustrate that everyone needs to be strengthened.

God knows what everyone is capable of doing. Unfortunately, as human beings we don't know what we are capable of and often aim below our mark. We need someone to strengthen and make us aim higher. The best way to strengthen ourselves is to give to others. We should not wait for someone to come and strengthen us, but we should reach out to others and motivate them. Naturally if we motivate others, we are under pressure to live the talk. This spurs us on to live according to our word and thus we have sense of direction.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Ecclesiastes 8:15
Isaiah 65:21, 24
Psalms 91:2-5
Acts 19:12
2 Corinthians 12:7
Romans 8:35-39

Chapter Nine
How Giving Enables One to Make A Difference In the World

Giving to God enables one to make a difference in the world

Jesus Christ narrates how he was an architect and God's source of joy. He also says he was happy in God's presence; he was happy with the world and pleased with the human race. He tells us he is in union with God and God is in union with him. Jesus has thus been obedient and subject to Him. He has been giving to God. When he was sent to the earth to redeem the human race, he willingly accepted. He suffered for our sins; he paid the price of our redemption.

The notable giving that Christ did to God was to share with us heavenly wonders, the qualities of God, the love of God for us and the possibility of living forever. We came to know God is hard working and hates laziness. Jesus said He had been working and He was still working. Perhaps that is the reason scientists say Pluto is no longer a planet. Perhaps that is why they are saying the universe is expanding. Perhaps that is why they are saying the sun will stop existing many, many years to come. Perhaps that is why they are saying the universe is infinity, and if it is infinity, replicas of the earth must exist somewhere.

But whatever any human being might say, everyone would agree with soldiers sent to arrest Jesus. When they failed to arrest him since they were moved by his pleasant teachings, they said, 'no one has ever talked like this man'. Indeed no one will ever talk like Jesus. Jesus Christ has influenced the whole world since he gave to God.

He changed the world. Most of the laws in the world have their origin from the Bible. The laws stated in the Bible are so immutable and timeless that one can only agree they are from a higher source. The writings in the Bible are so soothing with unexplainable power behind them that one is left to agree, they are from God.

By agreeing to give to God Jesus changed the world for better. When on earth, he healed the ailing, fed the famished and calmed the tempest. He resurrected the lifeless. He promised to do much greater miracles than these in future.

Another person that changed the world was King Solomon. He chose to give to God by following His command. In return God gifted him with the highest wisdom ever. His wisdom attracted the queen of Sheba who wanted to prove if he was wise by asking him hard questions.

Though it is not written in the Bible, it is said to test Solomon, he came with two flower vases. One was artificial and the other one natural. They looked so alike that it was impossible to pin point which was real and which was an imitation. He put the flowers

on the table and instructed Solomon to stand at a distance and choose the real one. King Solomon ordered the windows of the palace to be opened. Bees entered the palace and started seeking nectar from the real flower. King Solomon told the queen of Sheba the real plant and the imitation. The queen was astounded.

The second question was about wheat dough. The queen had made dough which was carefully covered in clay pots. She asked the King to indentify which dough had yeast and which one unleavened at a distance. The king ordered the clay pots to be uncovered, the lids were removed. Soon fruit flies were struggling to enter one pot. It is this pot that the king pointed and said the dough had yeast. The queen was equally dumbfounded and could not find any other question. She had to remark, King Solomon's officials and subjects were the luckiest on earth. Since it must have been refreshing for them to listen to wise saying from their king everyday!

King Solomon penned down the most timeless proverbs ever. They cover all aspects of life; from money matters, life skills, family life, morality and ones relationship with God. For the period he gave his allegiance to God, he changed the world for ever.

One of the most notable person that changed the world and gave the lowly, people of nondescript origin and the oppressed a fighting chance was King David. When God had rejected Saul

as the King and sent Prophet Samuel to anoint one of Jesse's Sons to succeed King Saul, David was not even considered a son by his father. Jesse paraded the men he considered as sons. Each one was muscular, handsome and well built. Each time Samuel marvelled at the son in front of him and thought he was God chosen king. But God reprimanded him and told him he looks at the heart not physical features as man beholds, they were not His choice.

Jesse had finished presenting his sons and God had rejected all of them. Then Samuel asked if he had any other son. He replied he had a lad who was taking care of sheep. Samuel ordered the boy be brought to him immediately. David was not heavily built and muscular like his brothers. Samuel did not marvel and think he was God chosen King. Jesse did not think he was his notable son. Yet God quickly ordered Samuel to anoint him, he had chosen him to be king.

David had praised and worshipped all day long with a harp as he took care of sheep. God had delivered him and he had single handedly saved the sheep from wild beasts like lions. Though he was underrated by his father and brothers, God highly valued him as he kept giving Him his sacrifices of praise.

Later on the despised and unknown David killed the Philistine Giant who the whole army of King Saul was unable to lift a finger at. When David offered to fight Goliath, King Saul was forced to ask his army commander, 'whose son is that young

man?' He was of nondescript origin, his family was not famous. Yet David changed the world.

Nowadays it is common to strengthen dejected persons, by telling them the story of David and Goliath. It is the story of David and Goliath that has been used to encourage less renowned teams to beat famous and seasoned teams. It is the story of David and Goliath that has encouraged the homeless to work hard and own a home. It is the story of David and Goliath that has encouraged the poor boys and girls in slums or remote villages to scale the heights and become prominent business people, politicians and able leaders.

Giving to oneself enables one to make a difference in the world

There are short stories with weighty or educative message. Some of the stories are as under:-

There was an old farmer who had two sons. The sons were indolent and their father, who was the sole bread winner, was always pained wondering how they would eke a living. When he was about to die, he called them to his bedside to give them his last instructions. He told them that he would leave them his farm, and that they were to share it and not on any account to let anyone take it from them or buy it from them. He told them that all the treasure he had lay buried on the farm not far below the surface of the ground.

The two sons thought that he meant that he had buried some gold or precious stones on the farm, and when their father had died they set to work and dug the farm all over very carefully in order to find the treasure and become rich. They disguised their digging by planting crops so that no neighbour would know what they were searching.

They kept digging periodically usually deeper in the pretence of weeding the crops. They did not find any treasure but the result of their digging was that the land became very fertile, and their crops were so good that they were able to sell them in the market. And so they became rich men in quite a different way from the way they had expected...

A number of hens lived together in a village. Some of them were fat and healthy and big, but others were thin and had very little flesh on their bones. The fat hens were very proud of themselves and mocked the thin ones calling them by all sorts of offensive names.

One day, some strangers came to the village and people sought to give them a feast. So they ordered the cooks to kill and cook some hens for the meal. The cooks went out and found the hens and they chose all the fattest and biggest ones and killed them for the feast. So in the end the fat hens were envious of the thin hens and wished that they had not been so fat and big...

There was a boy who was sent out into the fields to look after the sheep belonging to a rural community. He grew weary and

bored of sitting day after day, watching the sheep with nothing to do. So one day a malicious thought entered his mind and he suddenly began to yell: 'Wolf! Wolf! The villagers who were working in a nearby field thought that a wolf was attacking the sheep, so they all abandoned their work and came running to help the shepherd boy to repulse the wolf. But when they got there, they found that there was no wolf and they were very angry with the boy. But the boy found it funny and interesting.

The shepherd boy played this prank on the villagers once again and enjoyed how they responded. When he had done this numerous times, the villagers made up their minds that next time the boy shouted they would ignore him. Soon afterwards, a genuine wolf did come and began to seize the sheep and slay them. The boy screamed Wolf! Wolf! But the villagers took no notice of him, because they thought it was a false alarm, and so all the sheep were killed...

Such like stories were narrated by a slave who gave to himself called Aesop. As a slave Aesop studied people and realised people like to learn through stories. He noticed also that unpleasant truths if one told them in an interesting and amusing story, people accepted them readily. He devoted himself therefore in being a great story teller and orator that his master Iadmon grew fond of him and set him free. After Iadmon's demise he served the King Croesus. His stories changed the world for ever. Teachers in schools, politicians and leaders in a

rally and any captivating comedians in the present world, have aped Aesop by drawing the attention of the masses with stories.

We have many other persons who gave themselves by learning and became great scholars that have given the world a rich scholarly treasure.

We have many sportsmen that devoted their time to training and work-out that have given us a variety of spell bounding entertainment.

We cannot forget persons who have given to themselves to have healthy bodies and went ahead to leave us healthy recipes of nutritive meals one can cook.

Giving to others enables one to make a difference in the world

Each time you flick on or off an electrical switch, you might not know that the invention of electricity started with a small dynamo made by Michael Faraday. Electricity is so vital, providing heat, running a variety of machines and appliances that makes life easier.

Whenever you use an electrical appliance, you are likely to see wattage written on it. Watts is a measure of energy consumption of the appliance. The lower the wattage, the more energy saving the appliance is. This unit was named after a man who introduced steam engines, James watt.

Another illustrious man named Edward Jenner eradicated the deadly small pox when he vaccinated a child called Jimmy with cow pox. He was a precursor of the discovery of other childhood vaccines that largely minimised infant mortality.

Humphry Davy was another man that was intent on alleviating the pain of many people who were suffering. Dentist used to pull out patients teeth without an anaesthetic. It was a painful process. But Sir humphry Davy found out that nitrous oxide made one unconscious and dentists, though reluctantly, were glad to use it.

Sharing is one thing that changes the world. You have probably been to a hospital and have come to be endeared by courteous and smiling nurses. These gems were first discovered by Florence nightingale. Her tender care for the sick was the genesis of the nursing profession.

A nurse might have brought you a packet of milk while you were recuperating on your sick bed. Since you were idle, when the nurse had retreated to attend to other patients, you may have flipped the packet of milk. You may have first met the word pasteurised milk. Then you read the nutritional contents and after the nutritional content words like see the expiry date on top of the package. You look at the top of the package. You see the date the milk was packaged and the expiry date.

Then you realise the packaging date and the expiry date are one or more years apart! It becomes mind boggling to you since

you know fresh boiled milk from a cow cannot remain fresh for more than two days! How can milk stay fresh for more than a year? It is because of that first word you saw on the milk package, pasteurised milk.

Louis Pasteur discovered what happens when food went bad. It was because of microorganisms that invaded the food. If the microbes were killed and the food tightly sealed so that they could not enter, the food remained fresh for a long time. Pasteurised milk is therefore milk free from microbes and sealed so that no microbes can enter it, once the package is opened, the milk would curdle within two days.

The few persons I have mentioned above changed the world by giving to others. They devoted most of their time trying to make life easier or mollifying the pain of the suffering. They might not have had that goal of changing the world, but giving for the better cause of mankind would always change the world. How then can one change the world by giving? One can change the world by giving in any of the following way.

If one wants to change the world, he can volunteer his services to the community around him. Some years ago when the US embassy in Nairobi was attacked by terrorists, we had many volunteers. The usual hectic Nairobi where everyone used to mind his own business came to a standstill. People volunteered to help the injured. They used their own personal cars and took them to the nearest health facility. It was a time all humanity was

united. There was no discrimination on basis of colour, race, tribe or economic status. The voluntary service given changed the world. I am sure some who hated whites have since toned down their hatred. Those who looked down on coloured people I am sure they have since reconsidered their stand after witnessing how cordial human beings can cooperate.

Volunteering need not be something big, it may be small acts like helping the disabled navigate a ramp, the old acts of giving the elderly a seat and allowing pregnant and lactating mothers to be served first in a service store or anywhere else.

One can volunteer to distribute food in war torn areas, refugee camps and slums. He may help doctors and nurses by carrying the injured to and from an ambulance. He may practically help poor communities with methods of increasing agricultural production. A noteworthy volunteer was Mother Teresa; she gave her love and life to the poor community. She touched the hearts of those she interacted with and the whole world. She would be remembered when volunteers are mentioned. When those giving to others are paraded, she would lead the queue.

Another way of changing the world is by donating. While I was growing up, it was common to see children in the neighbourhood going naked. But over time the developed countries have been donating used clothes to Africa. They changed Africa for good. It is unlikely to find a naked child

nowadays. Every mother unless she is in a refugee camp, can afford decent used clothes.

King David set the example of Donating when he was able to influence his subjects to contribute willingly to the temple construction kit. Worldwide we thank generous persons that have contributed to the welfare of their religious cause. Credit goes to those who donated to war torn areas and people facing other natural calamities. I also give a big thumbs-up to those donating for children's welfare in developing countries. And a big thank you to developed countries likes US and United Kingdom for donating towards improvement of health in developing countries. Such donations change the world.

Like in volunteering donations do not have to be big; one can give used clothes to a needy neighbour. One can give a meal to a hungry neighbour; one can adopt and shelter just one homeless child. He would have changed the world for that one person.

Another way of changing the world is being kind to others. People are fighting many internal wars. Some families may be going through real war. Some workplaces are like a war zones. Many are going through stress, anxiety and even depression. If one has ever watched videos of content creators who are trying to be kind to others, he would appreciate that humanity needs more kindness.

In one of the videos, a man approaches a solitary lady in a public park trying to ease her mind from the hectic world. Automatically the lady refuses when the man tries to hand her a rose flower. This is because at that particular time, the last thing she wants is romance. She just wants to be alone and enjoy her solitude. When the man insists he is not after romance, the lady grudgingly accepts the rose. Then she reads the message attached on the rose flower. The message says, **'You are the most beautiful person I saw today'**. The reaction of the lady is priceless. Some have shed tears uncontrollably. Some lift up their head to see the giver of the flower properly, but unfortunately he may have been swallowed by the crowds.

Another such content creator is where a person hugs strangers randomly. Many who needed kindness react pricelessly. The videos are enough to depict that showing kindness to others would change the world. It does not have to be something big. One can help someone pick ones books or items that have fallen down. One can allow other vehicles to get on the way first at the intersection. One can be considerate to pedestrian and give way for them to cross. In virtually anything where one allows others to be first, he is showing kindness.

Closely related to kindness, is giving encouragement. As parents you have an obligation to encourage your kids. As spouses, you are bound to encourage each other. The Assyrian emperor was taunting King Hezekiah and his subjects grew afraid. But the king heartened them by saying, 'be determined

and be confident, and don't be afraid of Assyrian emperor or of the army he is leading. We have more power on our side than he has on his side. He has human power, but we have the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles'

The account continues that the people were encouraged by the words of their king. All leaders have to encourage those they rule. I said on the onset of this chapter that parents have to encourage their children. Bosses have to encourage their subordinates and politicians and celebrities have to encourage their followers. If one wants to make a difference in the world, he does not have to be a parent, a boss, a politician or a celebrity; he just has to encourage those he interacts with. If he strengthens someone whose shoulders were drooping, he has made a difference.

James advised God fearing people to be quick to listen, but slow to speak. Comedians have paraphrased it this way, 'we were given two ears and one mouth, and therefore we should listen as twice as we speak'. Listening deeply is an art many people lack. Most people listen to answer and not to understand. As we have seen in the previous paragraphs, people need kindness and encouragement. When we give them kindness and encouragement, they become recipients of our love. Up to this point if you have read this book without skipping a chapter, you understand there is more joy in giving than receiving.

Recipients of kindness and encouragement also need to give so that their joy may be full. They give by; sharing their joys, their disappointment, their fears, their hopes, their experiences, their failures and their successes. The listener should always listen keenly. Lowndes (2003) discusses tricks of being a good listener and they include; **echoing, lending a helping tongue and instant replay**. When one is talking you can repeat some of his choice words to encourage him to keep talking - **echoing**. Everyone would be thrilled to hear his own words repeated by the listener. When one is talking and the talk is interrupted by any occurrence, when calm returns, remind the speaker that he was saying this and that, could he continue from there? - **that is lending a helping tongue**. When talking is over phone, one can record and replay at any time to fully understand the conversation - **instant replay**.

However, listening keenly may involve just listening to the speaker without interrupting and taking a keen interest in his welfare. Most of the time one does not have to interject or answer anything.

Another way of changing the world is spreading positivity. When Paul and Silas left the prison and went to Lydia's house, they met many believers. They spread positivity, encouraged them and left. So far I have been quoting the scripture to show how refreshing it is and how it can make someone successful and joyful. It is because the Bible spreads positivity. Its message is

called the good news. The good news is the message that has changed and would continue changing the world.

Paul told the Romans that everything in the scriptures was written to teach us in order that we might have hope through the patience and **encouragement** which the scripture gives us. He added when talking to Corinthians that those who proclaim Gods message speak to people and give them help, encouragement and comfort. Therefore, one can make a difference in the world by sharing the good news.

Throughout all generations, God has put persons in place with various skills. Esau was a skilled hunter. Skilled workers made Aaron's clothes. Ohaliab son of Ahisamach was skilled in tent making. Huram was skilled in bronze work and Leonardo Da Vinci was a skilled artist. One way of making a difference in the world is using ones skills for the good of others.

Software like Microsoft and applications like Facebook were found by persons who wanted to make a difference on the world by using their skills. We have sportsmen who have broken existing records by using their skill. We have leaders who have re-defined what leadership is by using their skill to maximise productivity. We have orators and comedians who have moved and encouraged the masses with their skills. Whatever skill one has, if he gives it out to others, he would make a difference on the world.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

1 Kings 10:1-3

1 Samuel 16:7

1 Samuel 17:4-50

2 Chronicles 32: 1-21

Acts 16:40

Chapter Ten
How Giving Enables One to Be Satisfied In Life

Giving to God enables one to be satisfied in life

God told his people, 'this day I call the heavens and earth as a witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers...' From these verses, a satisfying life is depended on one loving God, listening to His voice and holding fast to Him.

Loving God and Listening to His voice and holding fast to Him is plausible since He is the creator. Anyone using any appliance or machine is bound to follow the manufacturer's instructions otherwise he invalidates the warranty. If a machine is used contrary to the manufacture's stipulation, it may work but its life is shortened. To enjoy smooth and long use of a machine, it is wise to flow the manufacturer's instructions and warnings.

God is our creator. He has put in place laws holding the whole universe in position. He therefore has authority to give his commands and warnings to us. He is the one who knows how satisfying our life would be if we do his bidding. From the

excerpt I have quoted above, giving to God is a matter of life and death. If we give to him by obeying his statutes, we are assured of a satisfying life otherwise we have chosen death. Like I said using a machine wrongly, the machine may work but for a short time, those disobeying God's command may continue living but for a short unsatisfactory life.

That is why the psalmist sang that happy are those God chooses, whom he brings to live in his sanctuary. They shall be satisfied with good things of his house, the blessings of his sacred temple. Indeed this is true. It is God who created the oxygen we breathe, it is God who created the food we eat, and it is God who created the earth we live in. It is only God who can give us good things. It is only him who can give us good health.

If ones desire is to succeed, God promises His own that whatever they do they shall succeed. If someone wants to achieve individual goals, wants to be financially stable, wants to be happy, wants to be loved, needs meaningful relationships, wants good health, needs sense of purpose, wants to make a difference in life, wants to live long and wants to break free from injurious habits and addictions, the trick is giving to God.

No human being knows about the future, any certainty and success has to depend on God's intimation and our quality of giving to him. Ones personal goals and reaching financial stability would be achieved effortlessly following the command God has put in place to ensure one succeeds both individually

and financially. God is a happy God; hence one can be happy by loving God. God is the originator of the first human family, He gave rules governing relationships; it is prudent to listen to him. He is the one who owns health. Through Jesus Christ, when he healed the sick, the actions mirrored the great things he can do to restore and maintain someone's health.

Since satisfaction in life is not a one cap fits all, God would satisfy anyone according to his needs. God himself has said he gives each one of us according to his faith. This means we have some people who dream big things and we have those who do not. It would be unfair for God to give one a dream he cannot handle or he is not ready to do so. In Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid, he stipulated that human beings live to fulfil their needs in ascending order.

Abraham Maslow was wrong since persons who do not have dreams or have little faith would remain satisfied at the physiological needs level. They enjoy life at this area and that is their satisfaction area. God would give them what they need and there is nothing wrong with that. Persons whose dreams are big or God has earmarked them for great things; he pushes them to the self-actualization level without having to pass through the other levels. We have kings who started ruling when they were young and we have leaders like Joseph and David who jumped most of the levels highlighted by Abraham Maslow.

However, I would like to appreciate Maslow's work since it helps me explain that his levels of needs are in fact ultimate levels of satisfaction for some people, according to their faith and size of their dreams.

Lastly one should give to God by being thankful in order to have a satisfactory life. Paul told Colossians, 'let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the spirit, singing to God with **gratitude** in your hearts'. There are many opportunities to thank God. Life itself is a miracle worthy thanking him, health, food and protection are other occasions. One should look at the blessings he has in his life and thank God for them every day.

Giving to oneself enables one to be satisfied in life

One should give to oneself by eating to be satisfied with life. One needs time specifically apportioned for eating so that he does not hurry in eating and he masticates his food well. The diet should be healthy. A healthy diet is composed of carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins and minerals.

Exercise is the best form of giving to oneself. Since giving is never easy, some people find work-outs to be wearisome. But no pain no gain. Exercise makes one happy. Exercise encourages production of hormones serotonin and norepinephrine which contains depression. It also leads to production of hormone endorphins which makes someone feel

good. The relaxation that exercise gives somebody prevents them from using drugs and alcohol to feel happy.

Adequate sleep is also another way of giving to self. Sleep has creative, curative and restorative capacities. God made Adam to fall asleep to create Eve. Sleep strengthens ones heart. During sleep the heart reduces its pressure as there are not many activities taking place among the body organs. The heart is not pumping blood aggressively to the lungs and to the body as when someone is awake. This allows the heart muscles to rest and relax. They are also rejuvenated and strengthened. If one stays awake for longer, it means high blood pressure is sustained for a long time and the heart has no time or limited time to replace it's worn out cells, thus the heart weakens. A strong heart is essential for one to live a satisfied life.

Sleep improves sugar metabolism. During sleep, the body is recreating itself. There is cell division, replacement and removal of worn–out cells needs energy. The body thus burns blood sugar to provide the energy. Lack of sleep increases insulin resistance. The cells have no time to be replaced and worn-out cell are not expunged. The tired cells reject insulin. And since blood sugar was not utilized as the person did not sleep, the build-up leads to diabetes. Thus sleep promotes a healthy body crucial for one to enjoy life.

Sleep reduces depression. Sleep allows the subconscious mind to work and solve your problems and also ensure you achieve your goals. Sleep deprivation means the subconscious did not work out solutions for your problems. It did not also come up with away to achieve your dream. This weighs down on your subconscious and the impact is you feel depressed. On the contrary you will be up-beat having no depression.

Sleep supports a healthy immune system. During sleep, new energetic cells are created and old worn-out are discarded. This means that the body has a new younger army to fight diseases and foreign bodies as opposed to the old and tired army of cells.

Sleep reduces body inflammation and improves emotions and social interactions. WebMD Editorial Contributors (2022) define inflammation as a process by which your body's white cells protect you from infection from outside such as bacteria and viruses and you feel pain from the nearest gland to the point white cells are attacking the foreign bodies. However, in diseases like arthritis, inflammation is triggered even when there are no invaders for white cells to fight off. Enough sleep reduces body inflammation.

In living a satisfied life one should admit unhappy moments exist. The good news is that our body was created to endure and persevere. Our body needs such sorrowful moments to fully develop. If such moments befall one, instead of sinking into

depression or using alcohol and drugs to cope, one should fast. Fasting and meditation has an advantage of removing toxins from our body and give us the chance to cast our burdens (or give) to God.

One should give to oneself by meditating during the unhappy moments. He can also keep a journal writing the milestones he has achieved in life and what he wishes to achieve when the tough period is over. He should manage stress by meditating, fasting, exercise, praise and prayer.

Satisfaction in life is a personal thing and one should thus give to himself by not comparing his life with others. While some people are content to have food, shelter and clothing, others crave leadership and changing the world. It is therefore not wise to compare ones satisfaction with others as everybody is given on the basis of their prayers, dreams and faith. If one wants big things, he should forget his "successful" neighbour and pray God sized prayers, dream big and have greater faith.

Giving to others enables one to be satisfied in life

Giving to others enables one to have a satisfied life. Jesus said, 'it is more blessed to give than receive'. The giving I am talking about is the godly kind of giving. That giving where your left hand did not know what the right hand did. The giving that is done in secret that only God is aware of. That giving that you are surprised and ask, 'Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did

we see you a stranger and invite you in or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and we came to visit you?'

When one gives food to the hungry and water to the thirsty willingly without expecting a reward like being voted in, creating public relations to boost sales and creating video content for social media he gets satisfied and he is happy and content.

When one invites a total stranger in his house ministers to him willingly, gives him clothes and other provisions, it makes him happy and satisfied

When one visits the bereaved, the sick and those in prison willingly and anonymously as far as possible, he derives the greatest satisfaction.

Giving to others is not confined to material things. Most people have more than they require in terms of material things but they feel unappreciated. Giving a smile to other people is blessed as much as giving food, water and clothing. Giving smiles to others uplift their mood and you would be satisfied with life for making someone else smile back.

During high school days, our science teacher pointed to us that plants absorb water and mineral salts by a process called osmosis. He also sprayed some perfume in on the blackboard but within no time, even the backbenchers in the classroom

could inhale the perfumes aroma. He told us the perfumes scent spread to the whole classroom by a process known as diffusion.

Over time I came to perceive when I mingle with certain groups of people, whenever I leave them, I feel tired and drained, I just need to relax in bed, and I do not feel like doing anything. But there are certain people who whenever I left them, I felt so energetic and cheerful that I found myself completing hard tasks or tasks I had deferred. The only conclusion I could make over years is that human beings must be sharing energies through 'osmosis' or 'diffusion'. If you have good company, your energy remains the same or you are energized more. If you Keep company with bad people, your energy is drained!

Consequently, give to yourself by keeping up with good company. Other than draining your energy, bad company will influence you to learn bad habits. Paul said, 'do not be misled: bad company corrupts good character'.

As a child I found it refreshing to be the first person to bear good news to my siblings. We always competed with each other to be the first to tell the others what father or mother brought us from the shop. It was joyful. But as I grew up, I realised every human being feels good being the first one to tell others good tidings. Therefore to be satisfied in life, one has to be a messenger of good news. One has to motivate, encourage, uplift, advise others and spread positivity. In fact King Solomon said a cheerful heart is as good as medicine.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Deuteronomy 30:19, 20
Psalms 65:4
Psalms 1:1-3
1 Timothy1:11; 6:15
Matthew 16:27; 25:15
Colossians 3:16
Acts 20:35
Matthew 6:3, 4; 25:37-39
1 Corinthians 15:33
Proverbs 17:22

Chapter Eleven
How Giving Gives You Peace of Mind

Peace of mind is a situation where you are calm within yourself and despite storms that are taking place in the physical world around you; you are not perturbed or worried. The psalmist put it this way, 'a thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.'

Peace of mind is distorted when one does not achieve any, some or all of his desires in life; that I have been discussing from chapter one to chapter ten. If you have read this book without skipping, a chapter, you can even see it in your mind you will not have peace of mind if you do not give to God, give to yourself and give to others.

But in this chapter we shall deviate slightly. In my book, **God Rewards you for acknowledging Him**, I mentioned things that made my father lack peace of mind.

My father was conceived unexpectedly when my grandfather was preparing to take priesthood as he had the desire to serve God. All my grandparents' children were mature and had been married. When grandfather was finally ordained as a priest, grandmother realised she was pregnant. My grandfather could not go back to family life and renounce his oath. Father was brought by my grandmother. His birth was bad news to his elder brother and the elder brother's children. My father's elder

brother did not wish my father to share with him my grandparents' ancestral land.

My father was oppressed from childhood to young adulthood. He lacked a male father figure as grandfather died when he was about five years and his brother resented him. He got a job and purchased his own land, and as fate would have it, the seller wanted to repossess the land without returning the purchase consideration. He knew no peace of mind as a child; he was being denied peace of mind as an adult.

All through his adult life he battled alcoholism, and neighbours who waged a war of nerves on him. He was peace loving, when sober we loved him. We always wondered why God let him pass through what he went through.

I was likely to walk in his footsteps when I faced opposition at the workplace. But I thank God I had learnt from my father and managed to navigate the workplace wars. I am peace loving. And despite working for peace and even sacrificing myself, my colleagues maligned me. They always hid anything that would favour me and tried to bask in my glory as their own. They tried to ensure I remained in the dark and stagnated as much as possible.

To have peace of mind, it is not straight forward as giving to God, giving to self and giving to others. You will lack peace of mind because part of your subconscious will be accusing you that you did not give to God, you did not give to yourself or you

did not give to your neighbour. And no matter how good or however generous you give to your neighbours, some would always be at war with you, when you are for peace, they would be for war. Why?

Hill (1970) quoted that failure breaks down ones morale, destroys self-confidence, subdues enthusiasm, dulls imagination and drives away definiteness of purpose. From Hill (1970) quote, if ones subconscious is reminding him he failed to do that and that then automatically his confidence, enthusiasm, imagination and sense of purpose drops. But the Bible tells us that it is not your subconscious accusing you, it is God's enemy accusing you. He would like you to stop giving to God, doubt your giving and confuse you. He would also use other human beings to trouble you and destroy your peace. That is why you will always have people at war with you.

God's enemy is Satan. He is also known as the devil - someone who tells wicked lies about another person. He was initially an obedient angel but he craved to be worshipped like God. He misled the first human beings that they would be like God if they ate fruits from the tree of knowledge.

He tricks people to worship him and call on spirits to protect them. He misleads some people to think their race, tribe or religion is superior to others. He also tempts people with sinful desires and harmful addictions. ***That neighbour giving you trouble is being used by Satan to deny you peace of mind. That voice***

condemning you to be a failure is Satan frightening you to lose peace of mind.

Giving to God gives you peace of mind

Giving to God results to one having peace. Job agreed with the sentiment when he said, 'submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity would come to you.' God himself promised that if his people worshipped and praised him, he would grant them peace in the land and they would lie down and no one would make them afraid. He says, "if only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea." In simple words God is saying giving to him would make ones peace never ending like that river that does not dry. Ones peace would also be boisterous or stubborn just like waves of the sea defying any earthly problem. In the same wavelength, Aaron was instructed to bless God's people as, 'The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace'.

Joshua led God's people successfully to the Promised Land. He led them to revere, worship and praise God. This giving made God to keep all his promises. It is written, 'God gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; God gave all their enemies into their hands'. No one could cause God's people trouble. They had peace all around them.

Another account is that of Gideon subduing the Midianites. It is said for the forty years Gideon judged God's people; there was peace in the land. This is because he had led people to worship God. Unfortunately, no sooner had Gideon died than God's people prostituted themselves with Baals - foreign gods.

The books of Kings and chronicles are full of edifying accounts of kings who gave to God and those who rebelled. Those that worshipped God were given peace and their thrones established. Those who rejected God faced many wars and lacked peace. The accounts are testimonies that giving to God is beneficial to the giver's peace of mind.

One of the kings that benefited by giving to God was David. In Psalms, he sung enthusiastically, 'In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety. The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.' Yes, anyone giving to God would be given peace of mind. He would have peace to pursue other cravings he desires in life, in the words of Micah, 'Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD almighty has spoken.'

Resist the devil to have peace of mind

One of the obstacles in acquiring wealth is drunkenness and spending ones energy on multiple sexual partners. One squanders his income and would never recover from the fall.

One does not remember to save so as to grow his wealth. Then the accuser would later on point fingers at him for the failure and he would lack peace of mind. The best thing one can do on the onset to avoid this scenario is to submit himself to God, resist the devil and he would flee from him.

Another obstacle to being rich is bad habits like gambling, addiction to drugs and alcoholism. The habits require one to spend substantial money to sustain them. They would wipe out ones savings and one would even steal to maintain them. These habits are a trap. One should pray to God so that he comes to his senses and escapes this trap of the devil, who would otherwise take one captive to do his will.

An obstacle to achieving anything one wishes in life is fear. When a lion roars nearby, you would receive mixed reactions from a crowd of people. Some would run away, some would yell not knowing what to do; some would be immobilized staring at the lion fearfully peeing at themselves. Others would faint, only few would seek the available weapon to attack the lion. So far I have illustrated all mankind's desires, are achieved by giving to God, oneself and others. But fear would cause some people to run away and forget giving. Some would make a lot of noise that giving is not beneficial, it is a waste of time; they do not have what to give and so on. Others would be immobilized by stress or anxiety that they would not give at all but sink into depression and lifestyle diseases. Others would faint and die of fear. Only few would remember to give to God, oneself and others

The devil prowls around like a roaring lion. Ones thoughts may sink him with fear. Negative associates may bring him down with fear. Malicious co-workers or neighbours may instil fear in one by oppressing or fighting one. But resist this devil, stand firm in the faith! Do not give the devil a foothold.

Giving to oneself gives you peace of mind

Like all desires a person would yearn for, a balanced diet would go a long way to give one peace of mind. One has to have food that provides him with energy, repairs the body and worn-out tissues, improve immunity and provide both essential and minor minerals in the required quantities. Carbohydrates and fats provide energy for the body. Proteins aid growth, repair and replacement of worn-out tissues and cells. Vitamins and minerals pimp up the body's immunity as well as enabling the normal functioning of the body. To carry a heavy load, we would use a truck; as it is designed to do so not a saloon car. Likewise, one's health has to be in prime condition to withstand accusation by the devil and wars waged on him by neighbours or work colleagues. Some foods also calm one and relieve anxiety.

One should also work-out to have peace of mind. Exercise enhances brain health and memory. Exercise promotes good flow of blood to the brain. Exercise releases the feel good hormones and enables one to be joyful. Exercise removes toxins from the body. Work-outs relax the mind.

One should give to oneself by having sufficient sleep. Enough sleep gives one peace of mind. Sleep allows the subconscious mind to work and solve ones problems and also ensure one achieves ones goals. Sleep deprivation means the subconscious did not work out solutions for your problems. It did not also come up with away to achieve your cravings. This weighs down on your subconscious and the impact is you lack peace of mind. Conversely, you will be upbeat having peace of mind.

Giving by forgiving is seeking peace of mind. One should forgive himself and forgive anyone else striving against him. By forgiving oneself, that guilt of failure should not trouble one. One should pray to God to forgive him and forgive those fighting him. As Paul said, forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone else. This means one may have a genuine reason to hold a grudge against someone else but he forgives and let's go. Therefore forgive the neighbours and work colleagues fighting you. Do not brood over the events of the day at night, but in prayer let God deal with them as he deems fit.

King Solomon counselled God's people to guard their hearts since everything flows from them. He meant one should take reign of his thoughts and should not let them to wander aimlessly. He should instead think of positive and constructive things only. Just like Paul said '...whatever is true, whatever is

noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.' Feeding the mind with noble and admirable things gives one peace of mind.

In the introduction of this chapter, we saw that the devil is intent on denying us peace of mind. Therefore, one has to accept suffering is part of life and is beyond ones control. Suffering does not necessarily mean one did something wrong. Peter had this to say on suffering, 'in all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.' Notice that suffering is not permanent, it is 'for a little while'. In the period of suffering one has to give to oneself by fasting to grow endurance muscles at the same time give to God by meditating on his word. One can get guidance on fasting and meditating in my book, '**Never Get Weak or Weary**'.

One should also give to oneself by being organized. He should plan his tasks for the day. He should tackle first those that have the greatest impact on his productivity. This would serve to motivate him and he would complete the remaining tasks under less pressure. Accomplishing ones chores would also make him feel good, leading him to have peace of mind.

One should give to himself by relaxing in natural settings. If one spends time outside in the wild, under the sun, feeling the breeze, he receives natural therapy. Nature unconsciously

connects him with the Creator. As he unknowingly appreciates the work of the Creator, he is giving praise to God who would in turn give him peace of mind.

One should give to himself by being active. No thought or any human being should stall one. One should pursue his daily activities as if nothing is happening around him. He should not fear his detractors. Peace of mind has to be fought for! In Paul's words, '... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.'

One should give to himself by Listening to music or doing something creative. David gave to himself by playing the harp and singing praises to God. We should give to ourselves by pursuing any hobby of our liking.

One should give to oneself by letting the details of his surrounding environment sink into his mind. He should literary drink his surroundings. This is appreciating the Creator of the universe and he positions himself to hear God talking and directing him.

One should give to himself by detaching himself from electronics and other gadgets. One's body need time to recuperate. Modern devices sap a lot of one's energy as they consume a greater

portion of one's time. It is therefore wise to have a device free moment each day.

Giving to others gives you peace of mind

As I said before ones lacks peace of mind if the accuser points a finger at him for being a failure or he is weighed down with the guilt of not giving. Peace of mind would therefore depend largely on how one is achieving his desires in life. For that reason, one should look at what he covets in life from chapter one to ten. Then he should perform the necessary giving to others. He would then have peace of mind for achieving his dreams.

While I was talking about resisting the devil, it was evident he uses people who would deny you your rights, oppress you or fight you. Hence, connect with people who love you and bring out the best of you. Avoid people who deride you or are happy if trouble befalls you. Even if they are not fighting or oppressing you, or denying you your rights, such people would fight you if conditions were favourable. Give to yourself by going where you are needed and cherished. Do not just fit anywhere because you can fit, no! You deserve the best and go for it.

In giving to others, forgiving yourself and others is the greatest giving. Jesus was insistent that blessed are the peace makers. By forgiving others you are seeking peace. In fact Jesus went ahead and said, when one has just started giving to God and a thought crosses his mind that he wronged someone, he should go make peace with the other person then come back and give

to God. In his words, ‘therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift’

Even for those denying you justice, oppressing you, slandering you and fighting you, live peaceful with them by pursuing official grievance redress systems. If you pursue all laid down conflict resolution avenues available and you have exhausted all of them, then you can rest assured God would deal with your contenders. Do not take the law in your hands. Paul encouraged that we should make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.

In giving to others, one should build healthy relationships. In chapter six I have covered the giving one should do when seeking meaningful relationship. One who is seeking healthy relationship should read the chapter. Finally, if one is a peacemaker who sows peace, he would reap peace of mind.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Revelation 12:10
Matthew 4:8-10
Genesis 3:1-5
Job 1:8-11
Revelation 12:9
1 Peter 5:8, 9
Job 36:11
Ezekiel 34:28
Numbers 6:26
Joshua 21:44
Judges 8:33, 34
Psalms 29:11
Micah 4:4
Proverbs 31:3-7
Colossians 3:13
Proverbs 4:23
Philippians 4:8
1 Peter 5:10
Psalms 44:8
Ephesians 6:11-20
Matthew 5:9, 23, 24
Hebrews 12:14

Chapter Twelve
Giving enables one to have a long life

Human beings have desired to live a long life. The early human beings were almost perfect and could live more than five hundred years. But the body immunity weakened as they married close relatives. Accumulation of hereditary defects shortened their lives. God also shorten the life of human beings after Noah and the flood to average 120 years. But the desire for men to live long never waned.

Men came up with various ways to elongate their life. In eighties it was common for families to drink a certain beverage called Kasoko tea. The tea other than treating many ailments, it was alleged to lengthen life. The tea was prepared by putting sugar solution in a medium size deep plate or a small basin. Then a fungus originating either from China or Japan was placed on top of the plate or basin. The fungus grew and covered the top of the plate or basin. Slowly the sugar solution below the fungus turned to the colour of strong tea.

Then the fungus died after three days but a smaller one grew on top of it. The dead one would be discarded and the new one would be used to make another Kasoko tea. It was a popular beverage and every family member drunk one or two glasses a day. But just as the beverage had become famous, it went into oblivion. It was never proved if it healed diseases or made people live long. The fact that the tea was no more is evidence

enough, the whole idea was a lie; an idea that wasted people's sugar and kept them drinking a useless but a harmless beverage.

After the Kasoko tea, another idea sprung up that drinking a child's urine elongated life. The proponents of the idea argued that the child's urine contained rare minerals that made one live longer. There was a urine drinking spree and those who did not have toddlers were forced to befriend a family with small kids at least to get a glass of urine. The idea vanished also in the thin air as the calendar clocked 2000 years.

There were no localised popular 'live long' ideas again. But there was advent of herbal medicine which the sellers claimed feebly that they made one live for longer. But as businessmen wanted to make a quick kill, the sale of herbal medicine has been centred on treating libido, diabetes, high blood pressure and any other lifestyle diseases.

But Statistics have continued to show people in developed countries lived longer than those in developing countries. While most specialists have attributed it to conditions in developed countries being favourable like low unemployment rates and accessibility to basic needs, the major cause may be obedience to laws.

The level of adherence to a country's laws in developed countries is high compared to that of developing countries. This makes citizens of developing countries to be risk takers and

they are likely to be destroyed at any time by flouting the existing laws. We have people in remote areas of developing countries who live longer than the oldest person in developed countries. Chances of violating a country's laws are minimal, almost zero in remote villages. But the most plausible reason why people live longer anywhere is by giving.

Giving to God enables one to have a long life

God does not require human beings to give him money, sacrifice animals to him or any tangible items on the face of the earth. He wants us to give him obedience, praise and worship. Samuel was emphatic that God does not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice. But to obey him was better than sacrifice and to heed Him was better than fat rams.

This is because God does not delight in seeing human beings die. Fortunately, all Gods laws are for our benefit. Someone was analysing that if the percentage of oxygen in the air increased by just one percent, there could be fires anywhere. You light anything and the whole place explodes into fire. Similarly, a slight change in any of the atmospheric gases; oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide and the rare gases, would have adverse effect on living things. The one who mixed the gases definitely was caring.

In this book, I have repeatedly mentioned the importance of ample sleep, nutritious diet and workouts. The one who created these laws knew they are good to us. We must sleep, we must

eat well, we must work and sweat, those are the laws God put in place. Those who breach them have spent a considerable amount of their time in hospital trying to reverse the adverse effects of disobedience.

We also have laws like breathing and excreting. Most people love these laws. I am saying this since a prominent scientist told me one time that when a person is peeing, that is the moment he is relaxed compared to any other moment in his life. That is why Isaiah aptly said, "this is what the Lord says – your redeemer, the holy one of Israel: 'I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.'" God does not want us to obey Him so that he controls us; he wants us to obey Him for our own benefit. He is the one that created the laws; he is the one that created us. Like a manufacturer who knows the ideal conditions a machine should operate under, Gods laws are the ideal conditions to us.

Consequently, giving to God is the only sure reason to live for a long time.

So far I have mentioned laws that our body obeys involuntarily. There are other laws where one has to obey willingly. Doing so is giving to God. When the Israelites were staying in camps as they were moving to Canaan, God directed that they should have a designated place outside the camp where they could go and relieve themselves. They had to have an equipment to dig a hole, relieve themselves and cover up their excrement. Human

beings came to learn later the law protected the Israelites from diseases mostly spread by house flies. This law could be obeyed willingly or violated. A lot of slum dwellers in developing countries have died of cholera, typhoid and other food and water borne diseases for contravening waste disposal laws. Hence obeying God would save one from diseases and he would live longer.

Another law God gave His people was that, when they build a new house, they should make a parapet around their roof so that they may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on their house should someone fall from the roof. This law was to protect someone from falling accidentally. In modern buildings, a parapet could be compared to guard rails on sides of the staircase and the balcony. This guard rails save life from accidental falls. As I said earlier in developed countries, all building would be inspected to ensure they meet the minimum safety standards, not all building would be inspected in developing countries. But giving to God is beneficial than fearing authorities, one should ensure the house he builds is safe to please God not because it would be inspected. When unintended accidents are curbed, one lives longer.

Giving to God would also include obeying the law where he directed no one was to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. In African society, in the eighties and going backward; where a man was reluctant to marry or was well over the marriage age, say he was more than thirty years, an aunt

would be sent 'to test if he was functioning'. All circumcised men had their own hut and it was expected they would start a new family from the hut. The aunt would drop in the man's hut in the evening and in the morning, everyone would be eager hear from her to confirm the man was okay. If the man was okay, a wife would be sought for him and he would be forced to marry. If he was not okay a witchdoctor would be called to start treating the man.

But sometimes the aunts got pregnant from, 'testing if the man was functioning'. Such a child when born was left deep in the forest as a sacrifice to the gods. Usually such kids had deformities. God knew that we all have weaknesses in our genes. If one marries an unrelated person, chances of weak genes uniting at conception are low. But if one marries close relatives, chances of weak gene and hereditary diseases being passed on to their children are very high. They would have weak or deformed kids. This law may have looked useless but God knew it was for our benefit. Strong children would live longer; the life of weak children was short.

Of late we have had motivational speakers and writers encouraging those chasing their dreams to visualize and feel they have actually achieved the dream. But long before these speakers and writers, King Solomon had said the tongue has the power of life and death and those who loved it would eat of its fruit. He also said in all things that a man guards, he should guard the heart most, since out of it springs life. It is God who

first told his people to visualize and when they pray, they should believe they have received it. He told them to have a vision, even at one time He laments that His people are perishing since they lack a vision. Having a vision helps one to live long as he is positive and he staves anxiety and depression. We should give to God by filling our minds with clean, pure thoughts.

God requires us to give to him by praying. Praying is humbly speaking to God. We should speak anything to God. We should pray every time; while standing, while kneeling, while sleeping and even when using washrooms. Prayer helps us to live long since it is an avenue of unburdening our troubles to God. We feel relieved when we cast our load to him. It also makes us happy to see him answering our requests and forgiving our sins. The feel happy mood elongates our life as our immunity is increased.

Giving to God would ensure we live a life that pleases him. A man and woman will ensure they are married lawfully. The husband would love his wife as he loves himself. The wife would respect his husband as the family leader. Husband and wife are expected to train and instruct their children. Children should obey their parents. Spouses should be faithful to each other. Whenever they disagree, spouse should endeavour to settle their differences before the sun sets. They should willingly forgive each other. The tranquil environment created in the family by giving to God makes the spouses live longer. Children

who obey their parents are promised by God Himself that they would live longer on earth and things would go well for them.

Giving to God would also require us to be clean. Godly people should keep their bodies and clothing clean. Keeping physically clean contributes to good health. Godly people's home should be neat and clean both inside and outside. Cleanliness is near to Godliness. Being clean gives one confidence and the feel good mood. This increases the release of the feel good hormones that make one live longer. As cleanliness curbs disease and makes one healthy, it increases his life span.

Giving to God would mean we shun habits He hates. These include: heavy drinking or drunkenness, violence and anger, calling on the power of spirits to heal the sick or cast spells on enemies to make them sick or kill them, stealing, gambling , lying and fornication. All these practises encourage the accuser to later point a finger on you for failure as they prevent one having his goals realised. They also leave one feeling guilty. Recoiling from the above habits increases one's life span.

Giving to oneself enables one to have a long life

One should give to oneself by working-out and having physical exercises regularly. They increase the feel good hormones, relief stress and anxiety, purge toxins from the body and strengthen body organs. This increases life span.

A healthy diet is essential in helping the body to grow and to function optimally. This slows down aging and thus one lives for a long time.

Taking care of oneself would require one to monitor his Body Mass Index. He should pay attention to his weight and shape. He should take care of his BMI by healthy diets and physical exercises.

One should give to himself by learning continuously. Our brain was designed to learn forever. An active brain slows down the aging process.

One should give to oneself by treating one's body with tender care. Other than nourishing it with food and exercise, one should be good to oneself; one should not be hard on oneself for his failures. King Solomon said the righteous may fall seven times but would rise again; therefore, a single failure should not immobilize one.

One should give to oneself by ensuring he is safe by always wearing safety gear when working as the situations dictates.

One should give to oneself by having sufficient sleep.

One should give to oneself by managing stress and anxiety, one may use workouts and diet, but in some instance, it is wise to consult a physician.

One should give to oneself by believing in what keeps him going. One should have a driving force, be motivated and have a guiding light towards a life he thinks would satisfy him.

Giving to others enables one to have a long life

Children are specifically requested by God to give to their parents by respecting them. When they give so willingly, God rewards them with long live. In God's own words he said, 'honour your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you'. Many years later, Paul had to repeat God's words to Ephesians when he said, 'children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother"- which is the first commandment with a promise-"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth"'.

On the onset of this chapter, I highlighted that developing countries have low life expectancy not because of unemployment and inaccessibility to social amenities but because of a high tendency to breach the existing laws. Drivers on the road are only obedient when a police is patrolling nearby; otherwise their disregard to traffic laws leads to many deaths. Producers manufacture sub-standard products and bribe to get standardization symbols stamped on their products. Employment in public institution is determined by favouritism, nepotism, tribalism and political influence. Thus inept persons

end up holding key positions. Such persons disregard safety measures and disaster preparedness (or they do not know about them) shortening the life of many.

It is common to come across news like people died after consuming illegal brews, the water pumped into taps at home had no chlorine since persons at water towers and reservoirs forgot to put chlorine in the water, a building still under construction collapsed, an infrastructure collapsed, sugar has been recalled from service stores shelves for containing a lot of mercury, several people died after consuming maize meal containing aflatoxin. Peanut butter for a certain company has been banned for containing excess aflatoxin. The stories are endless but they all point to disobeying the laws of the country.

If one loves God, he would give to others by ensuring he minds their safety not because he would be policed by authorities but he wants to give others the best products and services. These would not only ensure he succeeds by having a loyal clientele, an enduring business but also a long life. When you do good to others God promises to protect you. For instance, you may not know the water in you tap does not have chlorine due to someone's negligence. But God's favour would be on you and he would protect you from pathogens in water.

God himself promises to protect you from exceptional circumstances where others violate laws and put you in danger. In his own words he says, "you will tread on lion and the cobra;

you will trample the great lion and the serpent. 'Because he loves me' says the Lord. 'I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. **With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation'**". Notice that God promises if you give to others and do good to others by obeying the laws of the country, you will live long. This is because most laws in all countries rhyme with God's laws, and God's law are for our benefit.

There is a narrative of a mother who loved God and gave to her neighbours and colleagues by doing good. She afforded a smile for everyone. When one was in doldrums, her enchanting smile lifted them from their low spirits. If she missed work for even an hour, everyone noticed as the mood at work would be solemn. She was the spark that made her work station cheerful. She also gave by visiting her sick neighbours and colleagues, cleaning their house, preparing them a meal and praying for them to get better soon.

One day, when she was about to leave for work, her child became troublesome. He clanged oh her and would not let her go. That commotion destroyed the zip of her dress. She had to go to her bedroom and put on another dress. Then she tried to pacify the child with his favourite mango smoothie, the child was happy for a moment, then without a warning, he poured the smoothie on his mother. Her clothes were soiled and painted yellow.

The mother found tears rolling down her cheeks. Her first impulse was to whack the child mercilessly but she restrained herself. She remembered a Bible verse that parents should discipline their kids lovingly and should not mistreat them so that they do not become disheartened. Then she thought perhaps her maid was mistreating her child. The child must have been afraid to remain home with the maid.

She was late for work, she had missed her bus. At the moment the child was laughing at her mother as if the smoothie finding its way clumsily on her mother's clothes was the funniest thing he had ever seen. Then the child disembarked from his mother and told her brokenly, 'go to job, bring me sweets.' The mother thought this was an insult, but the broken words of her child just learning to talk were so pacifying and soothing to her that she smiled broadly and went to the bedroom to change her dress.

This time she left the house peacefully without the child causing any hullabaloo. The child just clung on the maid and kept waving to his mother saying, 'bye mummy'. 'Bye mummy'. As she stepped out of the house, a neighbour's car screeched to a halt in front of her door. The neighbour Jumped out of the car and hugged her. She was wondering what was going on, dazzled and confused. And at the back of her mind annoyed, she could not afford another human being to extend her lateness for work. The neighbour kept murmuring, 'glad you are alive, glad you are alive', as she hugged her possessively like a precious stone.

Then she asked her if she was going to work rhetorically. Before she could answer, she took her hand and dragged her to the passenger seat. She drove yapping incessantly. First telling her she was free that day. “I was going to Mombasa Island when through my car radio I heard a ferry had sunk and rescue efforts were on top gear. Then a thought occurred to me that at the time the ferry drowned you would be on board in your bus crossing the ferry. Without even realising, I turned the car and came to your house, what a relief to see you alive!”

The other lady clasped her hands to her mouth her eyes dilating with a mixture of horror, wonder and immense relief at the news that has just been unfolded. The ladies remained quiet for the rest of the journey. They crossed the ocean with remaining ferry safely. Her neighbour dropped her directly to her office; she promised to pick her in the evening and went about her business. When the God fearing lady stepped into the office, everything came to a standstill. At first shock was written on her colleagues face and they stood still for half a minute. Then they all flew in her direction hugging her at once nearly suffocating her. They caused a great tumult that the other offices joined them to witness what was happening.

Everything was self explanatory. Everybody had discussed her demise that morning. Nobody bothered to call her as they assumed she was aboard the ferry that sunk. The boss declared they were not working that day to celebrate that she was alive and mourn the death of other innocent victims who died due to

human negligence. Quickly a celebration was arranged at her place of work and they celebrated the whole day, or was it mourning? But during the 'celebration', her hazy mind cleared and she remembered God used her son to delay her so that she could not face death. He was intent on giving her long life for giving to others and obeying Him.

Giving to others also includes advising them honestly. When one encourages others and gives appropriate advice to those who confide in him, he is giving. One should not speak to others with malice hidden in his heart but should speak soothingly and encouragingly. By so doing he is giving. And since there is more happiness in giving than receiving, he would be happy, being happy elongates one's life. That is why King Solomon aptly said, 'a cheerful heart is good as medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones'. Happiness cheers up one; withholding good from others makes one gloomy, eventually sick and shortens his life.

To live long one should select acquaintances astutely. Paul cautioned about the calibre of friends one chooses. Without mincing his words he said one should not be misled, bad company corrupts good character. He warned against friends who say, "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die". For one to have a sense of purpose, he must have a vision. If ones vision is 'for tomorrow we die', that person would become reckless. He would not put effort to study or work hard, he would not save, and he would not give. He would embezzle whatever he has 'for tomorrow he dies'.

Not giving shortens one's life. One who mingles with people having a poor attitude of 'tomorrow we die' is affected negatively as bad associates corrupt good morals. The only thing such people know best is being drunk, abusing drugs and other substance, being gluttonous and being promiscuous. They do not invest in the future since they have no future. One should associate with good friends who bring out the best in him and encourage him to use his full potential. This will keep one motivated, healthy and happy and he would live longer.

Do not forget to give to others by forgiving them. I read somewhere but forgot the source that, forgiveness is like releasing a prisoner then you realise the prisoner was you. The source added that keeping a grudge is like drinking poison then hoping the other person dies. The above statements are true, that is why they interested me.

I have always wondered why barren ladies become permanently sick whenever their husbands' marry another lady. Is it because they envy the other lady and cannot forgive their husband? Is it because they cannot forgive themselves over what they do not have control over? I may not know. King Solomon said, a heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones'. One is at peace if he forgives and thus lives longer, ones is disturbed at heart if he does not forgive or holds grudges, therefore his bones rot, or he becomes sick and subsequently dies. The poison of un-forgiveness slowly kills him.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Genesis 6: 3
Isaiah 48:17
Deuteronomy 23:12, 13
Proverbs 15:4; 18:12
Leviticus 18:6
Proverbs 4:23
Matthew 21:22
Philippians 4:8
Ephesians 6:1-3, 18
Romans 1:26, 27
1 Corinthians 6:9, 10
Hebrews 13:4
Proverbs 6:16-19
Ephesians 5:3-5
Exodus 20:15
Ephesians 4:28
Genesis 4:5-8
Psalms 11:5
Proverbs 22:24, 25; 24:29
Romans 12:17-21
Deuteronomy 18:9-13
Proverbs 18:10
Psalms 104:15
1 Timothy5:23
1 Corinthians 5:11-13
1 Timothy3:8

Proverbs 23:20, 21, 29-35
Proverbs 13:20
James 5:14
Philippians 4:6, 7, 13
Psalms 91:1-16
1 Corinthians 15:32

Chapter Thirteen
Giving Enables One to Shun Destructive Habits and Addictions

The destructive habit of drunkenness and overeating

Drinking moderately and eating modestly is recommended. In fact King Solomon said blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth and whose princes eat and drink at a proper time – **for strength and not for drunkenness.** I have mentioned the importance of balanced diet throughout this book. I did show it is a form of giving to oneself. Food and drinks are therefore intended to make the body strong and healthy.

But overeating is likened to water logging a plant that was created to prefer only well drained soils. The plant would wilt and die. The human body was created to handle a certain Body Mass Index dependant on ones weight and ones height. The composition of blood is also specified; it carries only certain sugar level, oxygen level, carbon dioxide level, salt level and water level. Change in any of the above compositions would be disastrous to the body. The human brain eeds to be alert to continue thinking and coordinate all other body functions to work properly.

Drunkenness and overeating strains body organs. The body has to work hard to store the excess food in its blood stream.

Excess alcohol inhibits the function of the brain to coordinate other organs. Thus one lacks vital quality like self-control. He would be unable to control anger; he would speak obscenities and be unable to control his sexual passions.

Giving to God would ensure one does not drink heavily and does not eat gluttonously as this may ruin ones health and disrupt ones family. One is also likely to give in very quickly to other temptations if he cannot exercise self-control over drinking and eating. Loving God and giving to him by obeying His beneficial commands would help one to detest what He hates.

Drinking and overeating consumes substantial amount of one's income and he may fail to give to himself by saving. If one learns to value and esteem himself, he would get the motivation to drink and eat moderately.

Drinking and overeating reduces a person's chances of giving to others. A drunkard has no time for his family and a glutton would not care that a neighbour slept hungry. The desire to give to others would compel one to spurn these habits.

The destructive habit of Slavery to fashion

I like athletics and in most athletics, the athletes compete when scantily dressed. Music is also such a profession that musicians dress sparingly when they perform. But like a real fan, I have always trailed my icons wherever the media would highlight their private life. I came to notice they are decently dressed in private

and you would not find them half-naked unless they are on the beach having a good time. If someone wants to disapprove me, watch them at the hall of famer or when they are receiving various awards. Watch them also when they have been called to grace an occasion.

Sometimes it is only the teenage athletes who find it overwhelming to handle fame that they would wear outlandish clothes but as they mature, the dressing quickly changes to decent one. Everyone should endeavour to dress to the occasion. It is common worldwide that every occasion has its dress code, and there is nothing wrong with that.

The problem arises when the leading shoe or clothes manufacturer announces a new dress or shoe and one is unsettled until he buys that shoe or cloth. They may announce a new swim suit, and you would see masses in a desolate area where the only swimming pool is a basin of water buying the clothes. Or you would see someone wearing summer clothes in the streets of cold Nairobi and you almost pity the person as they could likely catch pneumonia.

You would see people wearing clothes worn by their celebrities donning the streets of every corner of the world. They forget those are work clothes, not regular clothes. It is not bad wearing clothes similar to your celebrity at work when you are doing work-out or physical exercises, but I think it is wrong to wear the same clothes when you are going to work in an office. You

would be surprised even your celebrity would not visit any office with those clothes you admire when they are showcasing their talent. In fact we always see them changing clothes! That is why they have locker rooms!

As I said before, while the rich would dress to look ordinary, the poor would dress to look rich. It does not mean the rich do not have expensive cloths; their expensive clothes are reserved for special moments when they mingle with the rich. The poor should also emulate them. If the poor does not mingle with the rich at any time, it is stupid having expensive clothes, he should buy ordinary clothes. But if he mingles with the rich, he should have few rich clothes specifically reserved for that occasion. The rest of his cloths should be ordinary and decent as he normally meets ordinary people. Self-confidence and satisfaction in life depends more on giving than clothes. That smile you give, when others smile back or acknowledge it in some way, you feel good. Everyone's beauty consists of his true inner self of a gentle and a quiet spirit which God values.

If everyone prioritized giving to self by saving at least ten percent of his incomes, he would break from the slavery of fashion. One has to pay himself first before paying anybody else including the dress stores. One also has to pay God by cultivating the fruits of the spirit. In cultivating the fruits of the spirit, he should understand the occasion for every dress he admires. Some dresses depict rebellion to the government, church and some societies. Some are worn in the evening by

politicians in their get-together. What would be the need of wearing a cloth portraying you are rebelling against a government while you are loyal in all respects. What would be the need of adorning politicians' evening dress during daylight and you have never imagined being a politician?

Giving to others would necessitate you respect the customs of a given area. If you are within a predominantly Muslim region, it would be wise to dress decently and avoid scanty clothes.

The destructive habit of gambling

Everyone should appreciate a plant grows through various stages. All stages are important. Unfortunately people see the fruiting stage only. When the Palmist likened a godly person to a tree that grows by the riverside, he appreciated these stages and even showed there is a tough stage where the tree's leaves are likely to wither.

He meant life is really a rollercoaster where you may have fewer provisions and where you may be wealthy. In all these seasons, he was able to demonstrate, a godly person would never lack physical and spiritual nourishment.

A greedy person would therefore want to have everything at once and never appreciate the existence of these seasons. He would like to have money quickly and he is likely to spend it as quickly as it comes. Gambling is greed.

One has to pass through the stages a tree goes through so that he hardens and when he gets riches, he saves the wealth for his generations and not spending on prostitutes, drunkenness and being a foodie. In the chapter fifteen, it would be clear one has to be wise when giving out money. He does not have to give out money indiscriminately.

Habits are a form of giving. It is slavery to something. If one is a slave to greediness, greediness is his god. But such a god gives him no benefit for slaving for him. On the contrary he eats ones resources and leaves him a pauper. If one who is greedy substituted his god with the true God, he would hate greed as God hates greed. Paul warned Ephesians of greed when he said, 'but among you there must not be even a hint of...greed, because these are improper for God's holy people... no...Greedy person – such a person is an idolater- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God'

The love of God would make one avoid greed, and the money he would be gambling away, he would save as he has learnt from the ant. As his savings grow, God would surprise him, since He himself has said, whoever has, more shall be given unto him. God would add him money from extra-ordinary source and he would grow wealthy.

The destructive habit of Shoplifting

I love flowers and whenever I visit a place that has flowers I don't have in my garden, I must get few cuttings or request for a

few suckers. I can just find myself plucking off a small piece and pocketing it. Well, I don't know if that is shop lifting, but if it is then you agree with me the motive of most shop lifters is not to steal food. Most are in fact not poor and they may lift things they do not need.

An interview with some of them revealed that they felt good doings so. They felt thrilled getting away with shoplifting, it was exhilarating to them. They felt animated. Pinching without getting caught in the glare of CCTV cameras gave them an incredible sense of power.

Shoplifting is a destructive habit that may affect everybody even those who are not the shoplifters. In my town a businessman caught a teenage shoplifting. Out of rage with the help of his workers, he tied the boy's legs and hands; they took him to the basement. It was a busy day, so the owner wanted to first handle the business before he faces the culprit. While the businessman continued serving customers, the boy at the basement managed to untie himself and strangled himself with the ropes.

At the close of the business, the owner and his workers braced themselves to punish the boy with some beatings then set him free, but they found the boy lifeless! The owner was forced to involve the police and it turned out the boy was the son of a local politician. It was also evident; the boy had been depressed and attempted two suicides that failed. The boy's condition had

been hushed down and it remained a family secret shared by doctors alone since his father's political life needed to be protected from bad publicity. Though the police cleared the businessman of any foul play, the politician's supporters could not be restrained. They broke into the business and looted what they could and trampling everything that remained driving the businessman out of business.

Though this was an extreme happening, it is no doubt that shoplifting is costly to the society. We have professional shoplifters who make money by shoplifting, we have the poor who shoplift for food and we have the larger category that shoplifts for the thrill of it. Whatever the motive, shoplifting is a destructive habit.

But one can shun the habit by giving to God. God laments that, "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like waves of the sea." God knew many people were not obeying him that was why their hearts got troubled. The modern hectic life with lots of demand has placed everybody from a toddler to the parent in an oven. Thus it is bound to drive anybody crazy. It was therefore no surprise the teenager named above was depressed. Doctors have confirmed even toddlers get depressed nowadays. But God promises to give endless peace like a river.

Obeying God is beneficial, like the politician I just mentioned, if he had spend some time with his boy teaching and instructing

him, he would have tapped the peace that God gives and he would not have been depressed. By sweeping everything under the carpet and hiding the boy's condition without giving him fatherly love, he found it costly. He made a businessman run out of business. Later when his supporters learnt they had made an error, they never voted him. The political seat he was trying to protect at the expense of his son, he lost it anyway. And he never recovered.

Therefore, giving to others, training children to love God and honour their parents would contain shoplifting.

Those who shoplift to sale the goods and those who shoplift for food should follow Paul's counsel to steal no more, but must work doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

The destructive habit of Fraud /lying

Just like shoplifting fraud leaves the con artist with intense feelings of satisfaction that encourages them to continue manipulating others to get whatever they want, regardless of the cost to the giver. We live in an exceptionally immoral society. Deceitful practises that were damned in the past are glorified today. Most rackets go unpunished because it is often tricky to prove that deliberate deception actually took place. The swindlers understand and exploit legal loopholes. It is quiet difficult to identify fraud as con artists know how to win the confidence of others. They are experienced at making their

victims trust them. Fraudulent people could be charming and soft-spoken.

But the bottom line is, people are not in business to give money or share secrets to make you rich. If you have to pay for a 'free gift' or prize, it is a scam. The telltale signs are; if the offer appears too good to be true, the seller is trying to hasten you into making a decision and a man/a woman is trying to use the sexual attraction to the opposite sex to make a sell.

Always remember a man must sweat to earn his bread. Thus avoid too good to be true deals. Shun deals where the seller invokes the sexual appeal, this is to lure you to lose your guard. You have a good reason to be apprehensive if someone calls you claiming to be from a bank or a company with whom you have an account and asks for information they already have.

If one who has been lying and swindling others wishes to change, he should learn to love his neighbour as he loves himself. Would he be comfortable if someone else lied to him and fraudulently took his hard earned property? Most fraudsters claim they are stealing from the rich who have been oppressing the poor to get be rich. But if they became rich themselves, would they like someone to steal from them? Why have they usurped the work of God to judge and punish?

Another command fraudsters wishing to change should know is, they should not defraud. Fraudsters like anybody else need meaningful relationship with other human beings. Though

authorities may not be able to detain a fraudster, people know them as liars or con artists. They would try to keep distance from them. They may have buddies who aid them in defrauding people but that relationship is not deep, it business like. So though fraudster may derive 'thrilling moment' from successfully swindling a victim, they may not have peace of mind. The honest thing to do is they should defraud no one anymore.

Fraudsters are very intelligent people. If they gave to God by heeding his command, 'Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hand what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need', they could put to proper use their intelligence. Activities of the fraudster are receiving activities. His work only benefits himself and his buddies. Whether he makes big donations at church or to other organizations to feel good, that is superficial solution.

The permanent solution would be for a fraudster to turn his acumen into helping other people rather than robbing them. He can patent the security features he intrudes to enhance security of people's property, but he cannot patent circumventing the existing security features to steal. He may temporarily feel good stealing, but permanent happiness would have come when everyone recognizes he secured their property. It would be more thrilling to see all money safes are named after him than being recognised as a swindler in the society.

Fraudsters should recognize all habits are slavery. In every habit one is serving something. Liars and fraudsters are deliberately breaking God's law like Love your neighbour as you love yourself, do not steal, do not defraud, and do not lie. Therefore they are opposing or taking from God instead of giving to Him. For that reason they would never achieve the desires every man craves. They are destroying themselves; they are using their bodies in opposition to the manufacturer's specifications. They are not conducting themselves honestly.

The destructive habit of Victimization

God warned his people that they should not follow a crowd in doing wrong. He went ahead and said when giving a testimony in a lawsuit; one should not prevent justice by siding with the crowd. Unfortunately, most people are crowd pleasers. We have heard incidences where an innocent person has been killed through mob justice. We have seen an unpopular candidate being elected as the crowd was radicalised.

Jesus was crucified as many people followed the crowd. They had an opportunity to release Jesus but they choice Barnabas.

Since most countries have laws encouraging human rights, crowds nowadays operate in unclear way so as to circumvent the law. Crowds fight the war of nerves. This is where a victim is chosen, and a crowd oppresses him psychologically. This is known as victimization. If they have to oppress him physically, usually his property would be vandalised.

Such practise is destructive as the perpetrators are disobeying God. God said one should not join a crowd just to do evil. Participants of this behaviour would never achieve the desires human being yearn for. They should learn of Judas Iscariot, who lacked peace of mind that he committed suicide.

The partakers of victimization should learn to love their neighbour as they love themselves. They should make objective independent decisions and not follow a crowd just to do evil.

The destructive habit of Hate and prejudice

Sometimes in 2016, a picture of half naked children playing in mud appeared on Facebook. The picture was taken in Uganda. What made the picture to attract positive comments was that the children were white and black. Some people commented that no one was born racist, racism is taught. Others said when the kids reached teenage, they would be separated like the earth and the heavens, they were just innocent at the time.

I found this comments to be true. I mentioned in my book **God Rewards you for Acknowledging Him** that my paternal grandparents had embraced Christianity. And my paternal grandfather served as a priest for at least five years. I also mentioned that my dad bought land far away from his relatives. Now the community that was our neighbours believed in traditional circumcision. They hated anyone circumcised at a clinic, dispensary, hospital or any Morden facility.

They had a song they sang during circumcision ceremonies to deride those who were circumcised at the hospital. The lyrics were like this.

Song leader sings: They cut him when he is crying
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: They cut him when he is defecating
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: They cut him when he is urinating
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: Those who do not value our perfect traditions
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: Who should our beautiful ladies avoid marrying?
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: Who are cowards that fear the knife?
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.
Song leader sings: Those who do not know the pain of the knife?
Chorus: Those ones circumcised on the timber table.

When I was young I played freely with the kids in the neighbourhood. I was circumcised when I was a child. But the tradition in the community required one to be at least a teenager or an adult to be circumcised publicly where everyone in the village would witness. This was because they believed a man

had to feel the pain of the 'knife' and everyone had to watch him and verify he did not cry.

As my childhood buddies grew and got circumcised, a rift developed between us. They could not associate with 'a woman circumcised on the timber table'. They referred to a man circumcised in the hospital as a woman. Parents who wanted their daughters to marry real men told them to avoid 'a woman circumcised on the timber table'.

What I am trying to say here is that hate is learned. I mingled freely with kids in the neighbourhood, but we were put asunder when they were radicalised. Therefore, when persons commented that the white and the black kids would as they grow up, part and not see each other face to face, I believed it! We are not born racist. We become prejudicial as we are misled by twisted adults.

All human beings should recoil from hate and prejudice since God is love. 'Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen'.

Hate is the negative of love. If love makes one healthy, prolongs life and releases the feel good hormones in one; then hate would make someone sick, shorten his life and make him sad. God is a happy God, being sad is opposing his command and thus one would not achieve all that human beings long for.

The destructive habit of loving money

Money is the answer for everything. That is why in chapter three of this book, we saw everyone aspires to be financially independent. Though money can give one economic and political power, King Solomon asks, 'why should fools have money in hand to buy wisdom, when they are not able to understand it?'

It is because fools forget money is a tool and elevate it to a god. When money is a god, one would disdain the commandments, 'love your God with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding and love your neighbour as you love yourself'.

Those who are determined to get rich by hook or crook fall into temptations and traps and many harmful desires as they would constantly be breaking the two commandments above. We saw earlier a tree gives its fruits in the right season and sometimes it may face tough times that may cause its leaves to wither. But fools would assume they must have money all the times. This would be the root cause of all kind of evils. They will do anything to have money.

Those who want to avoid the destructive habit of loving money should apply all the lessons in chapter three.

The destructive habit of Slavery

Quite a number of people think they are superior human beings and others are inferior to them condemned to be their slaves. This destructive habit has not spared even persons who claim to minister to God. In my childhood days, our priest invited the church to help him harvest maize planted on the church farm. Only my mother, my two sisters and I were present on the material day.

The church farm was huge. We worked hard harvesting the maize from seven in the morning till one in the afternoon. We had no drinking water nor had we eaten lunch. Exhausted, thirsty and hungry, we sat under a big fig tree on the farm before we could start carrying the maize we had harvested to the store. At about that time, the priest came to assess the work we had done and he was satisfied.

But he asked why we were resting when there was still quite a lot of maize to be harvested. In my childhood innocence, I told the priest we had closed the work for the day. We would only carry the maize to the store and go home. The priest laughed derisively. Then he said I should have a good attitude since harvesting maize and working in people's farm is the work my sisters and I would be doing when we grow up. As a child I just laughed at what the priest had said and we were willing to continue harvesting even if it meant fainting on the farm. But my mother was hurt.

She told us to get up and we carried the maize to the store. When finished carrying the maize to the store some few minutes to seven in the evening. We had become used to our exhaustion, hunger and thirst that we no longer felt tired, hungry or thirsty.

When we reached home and we were having a simple supper of boiled sweet potatoes and sour milk, I suggested that the following day we carry our own drinking water and lunch. Mother said no one was going to harvest maize the following day. She went ahead and told us the priest was not appreciative and condemned her children to be farm labourers. She would not stomach that. The following day we would concentrate on our farm, she said that with finality.

Mother did not attend church for a long time. As I grew up, I came to understand that since my father was an alcoholic, the priest saw we had no future. Our education was in jeopardy. We would end up illiterate and the only work we could do was become farm labourers.

This destructive habit is everywhere. It is magnified in African governments as senior civil servants feel they are the sons of the kingdom and anybody else was born to serve them. Due to the luxurious and bossy life senior civil servant live, corporate middle level and upper management have aped them. They also wantt to be served and they consider everyone else a slave.

Across all human divide, some form of slavery exists even among the poor. Poor persons would hold weak persons as slaves. In the underworld; drug barons hold drug pushers as slaves, business men and politicians hold their assassins and prostitute workers as slaves.

God discouraged slavery among his people when he said that if a fellow Israelite became poor and sold themselves as slaves, no one was to make them work as slaves but work as paid workers. A kidnapper was to die if caught selling an Israelite as a slave.

God defends the weak and the fatherless, the widow and the poor. Anybody treating others as slaves would not attain all desires human being need as he is in opposition to God. Loving God and neighbour is the first condition to achieve the best a human being can be.

The destructive habit of Moral degradation

I have talked about moral squalor in this book. Therefore I would not dwell on this much. As I was interacting with the community I heard a teenage complaining he did not want corruption to end before he benefitted from it. I was taken aback!

I cannot overemphasize the benefits of being honest, even evil and corrupt people want their workers and subjects to be honest to them. We all know what sexual immorality can lead to. Any form of immorality is fighting against laws put in place by God.

They eventually destroy those who flout them. The flouters can only have some but not all that human being desire as I discussed from chapter 1 to 10

The destructive habit of Anger/Violent crime

Causes of anger are multifaceted but it is generally agreed everybody reacts to certain 'anger activators. This activators often result from; childhood and upbringing, past experiences, current circumstances, health and well being, stress, injustice/unfairness, financial challenges, feeling slighted through insults/disrespect, work or relationship issues, accidents or bad traffic, violence or abuse and threat to ones authority/reputation whether real or imagined. Scientists agree anger causes heart disease, stroke, weakens immune system, worsens anxiety, causes depression, injures lungs and shortens life. Anger prevents both the victim and the perpetrator reaching their goals

Workplace anger especially from your bosses is so fickle, that one may not know its outcome. Only God can protect you from it. It was by divine providence persons like Mordecai, David, Daniel, Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego among others were delivered from anger motivated jaws of death.

Knowing God reminds you that you should not be angry or learn the ways of an angry person. Another way to navigate around anger war is walk away. Solomon said starting a quarrel was

like a breached dam; therefore it was wise to drop a matter before a dispute breaks out.

If you perceived your co-worker was hell bent on quarrelling, you could walk away by tactfully changing the topic. Or you could remove wood from the fire place to let the fire go out. What it means here is to look at what triggered past quarrel and eliminate it.

Curb stress related anger by prayer, regular work-outs and having hobbies. If anger is a result of unfulfilled expectations use the principles learnt from chapter 1 to 11 and achieve what you desire. God hates anger, violence and related vices like revenging or returning evil for evil.

The destructive habit of Terrorism

World terrorism has been a result of hating certain religions and nationalities. We saw in chapter 11 that it is the Devil that causes fear in people so that they lack peace of mind. He promotes these through terrorism when he makes some people feel proud and think they are superior to others. That is why terrorists would attack persons of 'the inferior religion or nationality'.

Terrorism would be curbed if the love of God and fellow mankind was instilled in people's hearts.

The destructive habit of War

Wars results majorly as people, tribes and nations fight over resources. It may also be a result of extreme pride of race or nationalism.

Wars would be restrained if the love of God and fellow mankind was inculcated in people's hearts.

The destructive habit of Addiction to television, electronic games

An electronic game makes someone part of the game and thus encourage aggressive behaviour. The participant taking part in a violent game is either a spectator of violence or violent himself as he beats or kills opponents in the game. Suggestible games blotch the difference between reality and fantasy, thus a participant is likely to be violent in real life also.

One problem of addiction to television and electronic games is that prolonged staring at the screen causes eyestrain and may weaken eyesight

The second problem of addiction to television and electronic games is one lacks exercises which can lead to obesity.

The third problem of addiction to electronic games is that games usually rob one of money and time he would use studying, interacting with others and being creative.

The fourth problem is that, like any other addiction, television and electronic games lead to neglect of important obligations and relationships.

This problem would be tackled like addiction to drugs and curbing slavery.

The destructive habit of Addiction to pornography

Jesus said that anyone who looked at a woman lustfully had already committed adultery with her in his heart. Pornography gives a choice of all women/men one wants. From black to ebony to Asian to white, from slim to fat to plus size, from fit to flabby, and from amateur to professionals. One makes a choice to his/her liking. Therefore he/she has committed adultery in his/her heart.

Committing adultery in ones heart awakens his/her sexual desire, which leads one to addictive masturbation. More so, one may find himself spending all his money on women/men and he/she would forget to save at least 10% of his/her incomes. He/she would disparage God's command that, each of us should learn to control one's own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lusts like the pagans, who do not know God.

Like any addiction, pornography would usually rob one of money and time he would use studying, interacting with others, being creative and neglecting important obligations and relationships.

It is not easy to drop this practise but if one is intent on achieving all that human being aspire to, he has to run purposefully; he should not be like a boxer beating the air. He should strike a blow to his body and make it his slave. He should put to death, whatever belongs to earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed. Like the psalmist said, 'let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked', he should hate this practise.

The destructive habit of Misuse and addiction to drugs

Drugs makes one a slave to them, they rob one of money and time he would use studying, interacting with others and being creative. They also make him to neglect himself, neglect important obligations and relationships.

The best way to curb slavery to drugs and other substance abuse is to heed Jesus' admonition. He said, 'when an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first...'

In Jesus' caution above, when a drug addict is rehabilitated, his slavery to drugs should be replaced with another slavery. The best slavery would be to serve God. Here instead of giving to drugs, he would be giving to God, giving to himself and giving to others. Furthermore, drugs would milk him of every cent, destroy his health, consume his time and leave him like a zombie. But serving God would encourage him to save, improve his health, free his time and make him sane.

That is why Isaiah fittingly said, 'Why spend money on what is not bread, and labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good and you will delight in the richest of foods.' Spending money abusing drugs and other substances is spending on what is not bread. It is spending on what does not satisfy. But giving to God by obeying his commands would lead one to eat what is good and the richest of foods...just by listening, then obeying.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Ecclesiastes 10:17
1 Corinthians 5:11-13
Matthew 6:25-30
1 Peter 3:3
Ephesians 5:3-5
Proverbs 29:3
Isaiah 48:18
Ephesians 4:28
Mark 10:19

Hebrews 13:18
Exodus 23:2
Proverbs 22:6
1 John 4:8, 20
1 Timothy 1:11
Proverbs 13:20
1 Timothy 6:9, 10
Leviticus 25:39
Psalms 103:6; 146:7; 11:5
Proverbs 22:24, 25; 24:29
Romans 12:17-21
Matthew 5:28
1 Thessalonians 4:4
1 Corinthians 9:26, 27
Psalms 97:10
Matthew 12:43-45
Isaiah 55:2

Chapter 14
Giving Enables One to Obtain God's Favour

Giving Enables God to accept you

Jesus tells us of a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was a beggar covered with sores longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. The rich man had more than enough food, but he did not give some portion to the beggar, the beggar only yearned and hoped to have even what fell under his table. Since dogs surrounded the beggar licking his wound they must have outwitted the beggar in eating what fell under the rich man's table.

By comparison, King Solomon talks about the model wife. She was rich. It is said she opened her arms to the poor and extended her hands to the needy.

The two accounts contrast each other. The model wife sought for the poor and the needy. She did not have to wait for them to come and beg at her gate. In fact they never came to beg since she had already reached out and helped them. On the other hand the rich man was so mean that the beggar camped at his gate not sure he would receive help, but hoping to.

The rich man did not receive acceptance from God. The model woman received acceptance as Solomon pens off by saying, charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord will obtain favour. The woman obtained Gods acceptance since, 'when you give to the poor, it is like lending to the Lord, and the Lord will repay you back' –GNB.

Giving attracts God's acceptance when it is done willingly with gratitude to God. Abel and Cain gave to God by offering sacrifices. Abel was grateful to God, and depicted this by choosing the first born of his flock and placing fat and choice parts before God. Cain was careless and ungrateful. He just picked fruits from the ground and sacrificed to God. He never carried out a meticulous choice.

God requires us to offer sacrifices of praise, heed His commands, love ourselves and love our neighbours. David while looking after sheep, he played the harp and praised God. God accepted him and delivered him from all wild animals that attacked sheep. He killed all of them, further, God trained him for war.

To stamp his acceptance of David, he sent Prophet Samuel to anoint him as the King that would rule after King Saul. God continued to show his acceptance to David when he led him to Kill Goliath, protected him from King Saul and made him win all his battles. His sacrifices of praise were soothing and acceptable to God.

Giving Enables God to approve you

Abraham was taken outside by God and was told to look at the sky and try to count the stars. He was then told he would have as many descendants as the stars. Then Abraham brought a cow, a goat, a ram each three years old, and a dove and a pigeon. He cut them in half and placed the halves opposite each other in rows; but he did not cut the birds. He remained vigilant chasing away the vultures that came down trying to devour the bodies.

God told Abraham he had approved him and he would live to a ripe old age, die in peace and be buried. God made a covenant with Abraham to give his descendants land and blessings.

One other person that sought God's approval was the psalmist. He knew giving attracted God's approval. He implored God to receive his prayer as incense and his uplifted hands as the evening sacrifice. However, Jesus cautioned about showy prayers made in public places for people to see. The prayers were best contrite and private.

Another person who was approved by God is the Good Samaritan. God had chosen the Jews as his people. But it happened a Jew had been robbed and beaten mercilessly and left on the road for the dead.

A priest going to Jerusalem used the same road and saw the half dead man on the road. He made sure he passed the robbed

man as far as possible. Soon a Levite came along saw the man and distanced himself from the man as far as possible and continued with his journey.

But a Samaritan, as he was travelling, saw the man, he took pity on him. He went and bandaged his wounds, pouring wine and oil on them. Then he put the man on the donkey and took him to the nearest dispensary. He promised the dispensary owner he would pay the full cost of treatment after his journey.

Notice that the priest and the Levite were very religious people. They led worship and religious ceremonies; they were examples to all the Jews. But they could not help their injured brother, a Jew. The Samaritans, on the other hand, were looked down upon. They could not share a table with a Jew as they were considered sinners. Despite being scorned, the Samaritan helped a Jew.

His giving was selfless out of good heart. He did not expect anything in return. He was approved to be God's loved one though he was not a Jew.

In the same way, the Samaritan woman was ready to listen to God's commands. He was thirsty to hear the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Samaritan woman was then co-habiting with a man. Jesus was able to tell her she had five husbands before. That increased her conviction that she should listen to Jesus more and do his bidding. Despite Samaritans not mingling with Jews,

she accepted the teachings. She shared with her town people and many believed her.

The Samaritan woman, despite her fornication sins, was forgiven and approved by God. Many Jews, who saw Jesus miracles, heard his wonderful teachings did not believe him; in fact they got annoyed with him and planned to exterminate him.

Giving Enables God to Help You

Joshua had sent two spies to scout on Jericho. They entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab. The king of Jericho was informed about the spies and sent his men to capture the spies. Rahab risked her life and hid the men in her ceiling. When asked if spies came to her house, she agreed that the men came. But she was quick to add she did not know where they came from and her house being a public brothel, men come in and go.

She sent the men on a wild goose chase, saying they left at dusk when it was time to close the city gate. They must have not gone far, they could be pursued. So the king's men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone, the gate was closed.

She went to the ceiling at night and told the spies she knew God had given them Jericho as great fear had fallen on residents of Jericho. She narrated to them how they had heard that the red

sea was dried for them as they came out of Egypt, what they did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of Amorites east of Jordan, whom they had destroyed completely.

She then entreated them to swear to her by God that they would show kindness to her family, because she had given kindness to them. She wanted a sure sign from them that they would spare the lives of her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belong to them-and that they would save them from death.

The spies assured her if she kept the secret, they would treat her kindly and faithfully when God gives them the land. So she let them down by rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. She instructed them to go to the hills so that the pursuers may not find them. She informed them to hide themselves for three days before they could join Joshua and other Israelites.

Then they told her that the oath she forced them to make was not binding to them unless they enter the land, she should tie a scarlet cord on the window through which she let them down. And she should bring her father, mother and her brother and all her family into her house. If any of them was to go outside, their blood would be on their own heads, and the spies would not be responsible.

She agreed and sent them away. They listened to her advice. When their pursuers had searched all along the road and

returned without finding them, the two spies joined Joshua. They told Joshua everything that had happened to them.

Eventually Joshua captured Jericho and only Rahab and all that were in her house got saved. She was assisted by God since she gave willingly to God's people. She endangered her life with her giving. God helped her. He also helped her to be a renowned woman as she is always mentioned in the Bible as the great, great ... great grandmother of Jesus Christ.

Giving Enables God to pay attention to you

The psalmist said that God answers prayers therefore; all people would go to him. If God never answered prayers, what would the lowly and the poor do? Their oppressors are mighty and have the power. It is comforting to learn God can listen to anybody.

But God does not pay attention to all prayers. For God to pay attention to you, you must be trying to give him as much as possible by obeying his laws. One must be humble, and one needs to work on what he is praying for.

Hezekiah was a king that did what was right in the eyes of God. The king of Assyria taunted him and quizzed on what basis he was basing his confidence. He quipped that if he was depending

on Egypt, that was a splintered reed of staff which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it.

He went further and said that if he was depending on God, even if he made a bargain with the king of Assyria; he would give him two thousand horses and he would lack riders to mount the horses. He went further and said Hezekiah's subjects would have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine.

He loudly called on Hezekiah's subjects and said, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord when he says, 'the Lord will surely deliver us, this city will not be given into the hand of King of Assyria.' Do not listen to Hezekiah. Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern. Until I come and take you to a land like your own – a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death! Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, 'the Lord will deliver us.'

Has the God of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the King of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of God. Hezekiah prayed to God. 'Give ear, God, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words king of Assyria has sent me. Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God'. Isaiah the prophet then assured him that he should not be afraid. He said that God had heard his prayer concerning the King of Assyria. He would defend the city and save it for the sake of His servant David.

That night, the angel of God put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians at their camp. Hezekiah did not have to fight!

Giving Enables God to bless you

God told His people, "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land. Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart, then because of this the Lord your God **will bless you in all your work and in everything you do**."

In this book I have emphasized that everything a human being would like to have in life, he would obtain that need by giving. Human beings would like to be successful, they would like to achieve individual goals, they would like to be happy, they would like to be loved, they would like to have meaningful relationships, they would like to be healthy, they would like to

have a sense of purpose, they would like to make a difference on earth, they would like to be satisfied in life, they would like to have peace of mind, they would like to live long and they would like to break free of injurious habits and addictions.

All these needs became part of the blessing God gives to those who give to him.

Giving Enables God to have compassion on you

As a father has compassion on his children so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. We live in an imperfect world and unforeseen occurrences can happen to us. Like king Solomon put it, 'when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you'

At those difficult times, one would approach God and entreat him to remember how he gave to him or obeyed his commands. King Hezekiah was one of the people who called on God. He had been informed by Isaiah to put his house in order as he was going to die. But he was not ready to die. He pleaded to God to remember what he did.

Jesus knowing God would have compassion on us in trying times said, 'ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks

for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!'

True to Jesus' words God heard Hezekiah and healed Him. But King Solomon cautioned that one must have been giving to God to benefit from his compassion in times of distress. He says of those who refused to listen to God, 'Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me, since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD'.

Giving Enables God to be faithful to you

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His Commandments. God has promised to be faithful to anyone giving to him. We have a very long list of persons God was faithful to.

The best thing is not to go over the list but to start giving to God expecting that he would be faithful to us and bless us with; success in whatever we do, achievement in our goals, happiness, being loved, meaningful relationships, health, sense of purpose, peace of mind, long life and anything we want.

Giving Enables God to be pleased with you

When we give God sacrifices of praise, He is pleased. When we obey his command, he is happy. When we wait upon him he draws near to us. Giving to God makes Him to be pleased with us that He gives us more that we asked or expected. Solomon asked God to give him wisdom, in other words, commands to enable him rule justly. God was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. Let God be pleased that we are obeying His commands.

King Saul's father, Kish was rich. When his donkeys got lost, he would have sent his servants to look for them, but he sent Saul. Saul accepted and obeyed his father. God was pleased with Saul for obeying his father. While looking for the donkeys, he met Samuel and since God was pleased with him, Samuel anointed him as the first Israelite king!

Giving Enables God to reward you

As I have said before, God's commands were put in place to benefit us. You breath in, that oxygen is life giving. You breath out, that carbon dioxide would have been injurious, let it go, you eat, you body needs that food, you pee, your body needs to expunge those toxins. You exercise, that is what you muscles really need. You sleep, you need that nap to rejuvenate you body. You love; you need that love to be healthy.

All God's commands have an immediate benefit attached to them. But as a bonus God would reward you with all I have been discussing in chapter 1-12. Therefore, anyone who gives to God must believe that He rewards those who give Him.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Luke 16:19 -21
Proverbs 19:17; 31:20
Genesis 4:3-5
1 Samuel 16:13, 18
Genesis 15:8-20
Psalms 141:2
Luke 10:29-37
Joshua 2:1 - 6:17
Psalms 65:2
2 kings 18:17 – 19:36
Deuteronomy 15:10, 11
Psalms 111:4
Proverbs 1:27 – 30
Matthew 7:7 – 11
2 Chronicles 30:18-20; 32:24
Exodus 20:6
1 kings 3:10
Hebrews 11:6

Chapter 15
Kinds of Giving That Would Not Help You Accomplish All You Ever Sought Through Munificence

Giving publicly to be seen by people

In this book, we saw one way of giving to self is fasting. Fasting helps the body to exercise its persevering capability. It removes toxins from the body and improves ones health like breaking insulin resistance. When meditating about God's word is done concurrently with fasting, fasting becomes giving to God. Fasting and meditating on God's word is no longer for health purpose but it is for spiritual purposes.

Fasting for spiritual purposes is intended to help one;

1. Cope with grief.
2. Seek healing for the sick loved one.
3. Meditate on God's word and thank Him for His grace
4. Exorcise demons
5. Break generational curses
6. Bless ones children and spouse
7. Turnaround in ones finances

8. Solve any problem conceivable that one needs to cope with or obtain divine solution.

In biblical times, mass fasting was encouraged. People wore sack clothes and covered their face with ashes. They did not allow anyone, animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; they did not let them eat or drink anything. The disadvantage of this fasting was that a majority of the people did this grudgingly; they were forced to do so. It was also not fair to punish animals that had no will to choose. Yet God listened to the needs of the people during the fasting period not because all of them had humbled themselves, but because one or few contrite people made God pleased that He decided to save the rest.

It became increasingly difficult to practise mass fasting as God's people were constantly exiled among other nations due to their disobedience to God. Like the saying goes, if you go to Rome do what Romans do, it was prudent for God's people to obey the laws of the country's they were scattered to. But most were obstinate; they still wanted to carry out mass fasting. God did not want those outward shows; he wanted people to worship him in truth and spirit.

As I said before, in outward shows of fasting, majority did it due to peer pressure. Most were not into it, they were just following a crowd. God allowed the outward shows to continue since the people were not ready to face the truth. Fasting was an

individual thing. One could do it alone as he pleases without anyone knowing he was fasting. Only God in heaven would know.

When the appropriate time came, Jesus Christ spelled out the conditions for fasting, 'When you fast, do not look solemn as hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you they have received their reward in full.'

When you are giving to God and make it an outward show so that everyone sees you are fasting, that fasting negates any reason for fasting. It is common to see religious people wearing sack clothes or imitation of sack clothes and they make a procession from one town to another. People always leave what they are doing to watch these religious groups. Journalist would be busy calling each others, 'come brother! There is a story here, do not forget your camera!'

Then journalists would be following the pageant their camera's clicking ceaselessly and the video cameras recording. The brave ones would locate the leader of the parade and keep abreast with him to inquire what all that show off was about. The proud leader would proudly talk incoherently about the Nineveh people in the Bible fasting by putting on sack clothes and covering their heads with ashes. The intelligent journalist would interject, 'did the Nineveh people march from town to town like you are doing?' The leader would manoeuvre from that question

and say, ‘ In fact Esther called upon all the Jewish to put on sack clothes and ashes on their head, God listened to them, you should put on sack clothes and join us, God will punish you, the sins of the world have reaches Him, we must repent.’

The exasperated and frustrated journalist unable to get the answers to his ‘hard’ question leaves the leader of the procession and concentrates on taking videos. At that time, the leader of the parade and his followers are visibly happy to have attracted attention. They feel happy in their souls. Their joy is made full when the next day, their procession becomes the cover picture of all newspapers with captions like, ‘Repent! Repent! Thomas the prophet calls on the masses’, ‘The end is near, wake up, Thomas calls’ and ‘Return to God my people, Thomas the prophet pleads with the masses’.

Jesus said that such persons practising the outward show of fasting, ‘have received their reward in full.’ It is true, the praise and the attention the procession attracted made them happy. Most of them would even have a newspaper cutting of their picture and frame it as a landmark. They get happiness for entertaining people as their reward; they don’t receive anything else from God. They were amusing (or giving to) people; they were not giving to God.

It is common for many people to give to other people thinking they are giving to God who would enable them to accomplish all they ever sought through munificence. Take an example of

prayer. Prayer, just like fasting is intended to help one; Cope with grief, Seek healing for the sick loved one, Meditate on God's word and thank Him for His grace, Exorcise demons, Break generational curses, Bless ones children and spouse, Turnaround in ones finances, Solve any problem conceivable that one needs to cope with or obtain divine solution and routine communication with God.

But it is common to see people praying as if they are the authority themselves. They would shout themselves hoarse and stage manages healing and exorcising of demons. The loud speakers seem like an added power to them. Usually they would quote and expound on one or few verses before a long showy prayer session full of 'wonders and miracles'.

Stage managed people would shake and sprawl on the floor, some would throw their crutches away and walk majestically on the pulpit or stage, others would push away their wheel chairs stand up and start 'talking in tongues'. Many people would be mesmerized. To reach even a larger audience, their prayers would be having a live broadcast on public television stations or own television station. People would be placing their hands on their televisions to get their healing and deliverance.

But Jesus said, 'And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and

street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.'

Genuine public prayers are in order. But we all agree many prayers are public shows. They attract huge crowds both in person, televised and streaming live through internet social platforms. Prayers that God loves are intended to help the giver have all things that human beings hanker after. That is what I have been discussing in this book. But showy prayers are anticipated to give the person praying instant rewards. The huge crowds are their glory, the fat donations, their happiness and loyal following their ultimate success. As Jesus said, that is their reward and they should not expect anything more from God. They gave to people; people would reward them, not God.

That is why many of them are rich and their lifestyle is not even close to any godly qualities in the Bible. I do not condemn godly people being rich, since one of the desires of any human being is being wealthy. But I am pointing at the fact that they got their instant rewards by having showy prayers. People gave them money willingly for being duped. They hoodwinked people since they are not at all striving to live with the biblical principles they claim to teach. They are fornicators, adulterers, they cannot control their anger, they are abusive if someone quizzed them, they are ready to engage in dubious deals and would break any law just to get money.

Giving to people who think they are entitled to receive

Nairobi city has over six million people. Now as I was walking down the streets of Nairobi one day, I saw a beggar on wheel chair with a plate begging. There was nothing on his plate and I felt compelled to drop a twenty shilling coin which was enough to give him one meal. But someone beat me to the beggar unexpectedly. I had to wait behind the guy, to let him finish giving, and then I would do my giving. The guy fished from his pocket and come up with a hundred shilling note, almost one US dollar as the exchange rate at the time was seventy four Kenyan shillings to one US dollar, and a twenty shilling coin.

He gave the beggar the twenty shilling coin and put the a hundred shilling note in his shirt's breast pocket perfectly shielded from pickpockets by the sweater he was wearing. Entirely unexpected, the beggar threw the coin down and hit the giver with his plate. Then he asked the giver in Swahili, 'why are you giving me this little money? Why did you not give me the a hundred shilling note?'

The giver knowing it is good to mind ones business in Nairobi, continued with his journey as if nothing had happened. He did not even care picking the twenty shilling coin that had been thrown at him. Onlookers had stopped momentarily to gaze at the spectacle. Few laughed loudly at the incident. Most just smiled and some frowned at the confrontation. One brave lady interjected in Swahili, 'Asante ya punda ni Mateke.' Loosely

translated as, ‘a donkey will thank you by kicking you’. Visibly annoyed, the beggar looked at the woman murderously and said in Swahili, ‘Wewe mumama, unaona mi nakaa mbao? Kwenda huko! Malaya wewe!’ Then he ordered someone, ‘Kwanza nipe iyo mbao yangu!’

What the beggar said is loosely translated in English as, ‘you silly woman, don’t I look like I deserve a twenty shilling coin? Vanish away! Silly prostitute!’ Then he ordered someone, ‘Hey give me my twenty shilling coin!’ The lady did not bother exchanging insults with the beggar but went about her business. Everyone expressed disapproval to the beggar and sympathized with the lady. They murmured obscenities at the beggar at once that it was difficult to make out what they were saying. But you could sense they were annoyed with him, nevertheless, no one touched the beggar, and everyone went about their business.

I changed my mind immediately. I did not give my coin to the beggar but went away doing some mental sums. Suppose the beggar met five hundred thousand of the six million Nairobi residents and visitors per day, and each gave him a twenty shilling coin, that was a cool ten million shillings per day. That roughly translates to 135,135 US dollars per day using the exchange rate of Kes. 74 = US $1. ‘That beggar is a fool’, I reasoned and increased my pace.

In the evening, as I was watching news at nine, a feature ran in the middle of the news entitled ‘Arrogant Rich Beggars’.

Unknown to me, while I was witnessing the beggar-giver commotion, an independent journalist was filming the beggar. Luckily the giver had obstructed me that I did not appear on television. I hate publicity. Among other beggars, the documentary said the beggar had become rich from begging and had even built flats that he rents to the general public! My mouth went agape! 'So he was not a fool after all', I concluded.

The feature was an eye opener. I first doubted the Bible command of giving to the poor. But something drove me to make an independent investigation on Mombasa City beggars. I was at that time staying in Mombasa and had gone to Nairobi for official reasons. Mombasa is a predominantly Muslim city. Muslims believe in showing outward generosity to the poor people especially during the month of Ramadhan, when they are fasting. In addition Mombasa is a tourist city and many tourists from developed countries are likely to feel pity for beggars.

It was disturbing to realise Mombasa beggars do not benefit from begging. Able bodied persons would ferry disabled beggars from as far as Nairobi and parade them at street lights and zebra crossing venues. These persons would air the helpless beggar in the hot humid Mombasa weather while they wait and watch at a distance. Tourists and generous Muslims would see a sweating and helpless beggar and they would push several notes in his begging plate. A lot of these generous

givers do alight from their cars at the red street light to show kindness to the helpless beggars.

Late in the evening, when the streets of Mombasa have cleared, the able bodied persons divide the loot amongst themselves. Mombasa streets clear very early, by nine in the evening, the town is deserted. It is not clear what happens to beggars, but you would be sure to meet them on the streets the following day.

Since I am an ardent believer that giving is the key for one to accomplish all he ever sought through munificence, is giving to beggars one of the giving? God himself said, 'there will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land'. King Solomon replicated God's command when he said, 'when you give to the poor, it is like lending to the Lord, and the Lord will pay you back'- GNB

From the two verses, notice in the first verse it says poor and needy. A poor person is a person that lacks material possession. He may have lost the possessions through greed, stupidity or was born in a poor family. The needy is a person who is not poor but for some reasons he needs help. For example, I talked of the Jew who was robbed by robbers, beaten and left half dead on the road. That is a needy person that needs to be taken to the hospital, he cannot take himself.

He is not conscious to call his workers, or relatives to take him to the hospital, it needs a Good Samaritan to do so.

In the first verse, discern that it says one had to be 'open-handed toward his fellow Israelites'. It is practically impossible to help all the poor and needy, therefore one should single out his relatives and neighbours, those are his Israelites. He cannot help the whole world. In this book, I was clear giving to oneself is an important part of giving, if one wants to help all the poor and needy of the world, he would have to forfeit giving to himself. He would soon be poor unable to continue giving.

Being open-handed had exceptions. In his admonition to Thessalonians, Paul commanded that lazy people should try to earn the food they eat. Those unwilling to work should not eat. Now realise the poor and the needy are both hard-working people. The poor is poor due to misfortune or his bad decisions but he is not lazy he would work hard at a chore to get his daily bread. He does not feel entitled to be given favours by anybody. If it is a favour, he would like to be given some paid menial work.

The needy is a person who would only need a onetime assistance that may be money form or not. For instance, a person whose roof has been blown away by a hurricane is needy. He is not poor, his savings and job are intact. But he needs somewhere to spend one night. He is not lazy, a calamity just befell him.

Ruth and Naomi were poor due to a misfortune. Naomi was old, so the only person who could work was Ruth. She could have sought a job at Boaz farm to harvest wheat but fortunately, God had in place a law that allowed the less fortunate to harvest what was left behind by the main harvest. Ruth did not wait till Boaz had harvested his crop to go and ask to be given some of the harvest; she went in the farm and worked for her own food and that of her mother-in-law.

Helping the poor is giving them a means to work and earn their daily bread. It is not giving them handouts which they feel entitled to without working! There is nothing wrong giving anybody handouts, but no one is obliged to give handouts. It is optional. But Godly people are under obligation to help the poor and needy, by doing so they are 'lending to the Lord and the Lord will pay them back'. These are the kind of giving that helps one accomplish all he ever sought through munificence.

A story is told of a woman with an alabaster jar of expensive perfume. She poured the perfume on Jesus. One of Jesus' disciples, a tax collector reasoned that it was a waste to pour the perfume on Jesus. He thought the perfume could be sold and the money given to beggars.

Discerning his thoughts Jesus asked, 'why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The beggars will always be there with you and you can do them good when you want, but you will not always have me.' In essence Jesus

was saying it is not bad thing to give handouts when ones heart moves him to do so. It was as wasteful as pouring the perfume on Jesus as it was giving money to beggars. None of them had worked for it to be bestowed that gift. The giver was being wasteful, but it would leave her happy. That is giving that attracts instance rewards but does not help one accomplish all he ever sought through munificence.

Therefore, giving to beggars is optional. The best giving is where one feels he has earned it not where he feels he is entitled to. We saw how the Nairobi beggar was haughty? We saw how the Mombasa beggars are misused by lazy able bodied people? Begging has been infiltrated by conmen who play with people's religious mindset and mankind's feelings like compassion, pity and love. That is why God in His wisdom decreed the Israelites to help fellow Israelites, people they knew. This is similar to helping your relatives and neighbours. People you know their character, they are not just trying to be lazy, and eat where they did not sow

Giving since you have been placed under obligation to give

There are some churches that have forced their members to declare what they earn. Then they are placed under obligation to remit a tenth of their incomes to the church as a tithe. Nobody has ever felt happy paying taxes. When godly people pay taxes dutifully, I am sure they do not like it. The ungodly people will

evade and avoid the taxes as much as they can. We have legal taxes that everyone pays to the state. We also have black taxes.

When one is under obligation to give regularly to anybody or any institution other than the government, that is a black tax. Giving tithes, giving to relatives who feel entitled to and any other person or institution is black tax. No Taxes (be they legal or black taxes) would help one to accomplish all he ever sought through munificence, since everyone gives grudgingly.

Most religious leader always try to justify unpersuasively that the Israelites were under compulsion to pay tithes, therefore every Christian is under the same obligation. The Levites were consecrated to perform religious duties and lead the Israelites in prayer. They were to own no land. To maintain the Levites, the Israelites were to give them a tenth of all their incomes as a sacrifice to God. But due to their disobedience, God disrupted the system and most of the time Israelites were exiled. Everyone needed to work to earn a living. When Jesus came on earth, there was no Levitical class but the Pharisees and scribes.

If church giving is hinged on the biblical tithes, do religious leaders clamouring for the black tax own property? Did Levites own anything? That is why Micah aptly said, “As for the prophets who lead my people astray, they proclaim ‘peace’ if they have something to eat, but prepare to wage war against anyone who refuses to feed them”. Church leaders who feel

their members are under compulsion to give them a tenth of their incomes are just like a beggar who feels entitled to be given money by other people.

When members are giving, the religious leader became satisfied and would not thank members. Instead they start living in opulence and tell their members they want to upgrade their car, house and anything else. When members stop giving for reasons they have not found out, they wage war against them. There is a Kenyan pastor who poured offerings in front of the church and castigated everyone that gave less than a thousand shilling note.

Most religious leaders, who force black tax on their members, would not tell them that the tenth was also part of what one had to give the poor and the needy. If one had a neighbour that was facing a problem and the whole of his tenth of income is required to solve his problem, would it be wrong to give the money to the neighbour and deny the religious leader?

It would not be wrong at all. Like I said before any income one earns, he should invoke Clason (1926) suggestion of saving at least ten percent, then he should set aside at least ten percent for donations and spend the rest on family needs. The donation money could go anywhere, it could help the poor, it could help the needy, and he could donate to the church. Wherever it goes, one has to do so willingly, when compulsion is involved, it

invalidates ‘lending to the Lord, and the Lord will pay you back’ adage.

God himself directed, ‘ when you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied’.

Notice that the tithe was the minimal giving one could do and it was not strictly to the Levite but also to the poor and needy of the society. I am not saying people should not give to religious leaders, far from it! ‘It is written do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.’ And ‘the worker deserves his wages.’ It should therefore be appreciated religious leaders spend sleepless nights fasting and interceding for their followers. They carry a lot of research to keep the followers abreast with the changing world but should also remain morally clean. Their followers should be grateful for that. Thus they can donate willing to them.

Religious leaders are oxen treading the grain. They should not be greedy and place on shoulders of their followers black tax that impoverish them. Like an ox allowed to eat the grain it threads, the impact of the ox eating the grain is minimal. In manufacturing world, it would be termed as normal wastage. Therefore the impact of what church followers donate to the church leaders should be minimal to their income; the followers should not see it as jeopardizing their expenditure and being a

burden to them. And it is quite normal if a follower is moved to donate the whole of his income to a church leader – he may do so if he has a buffer of savings. The fundamental principle should be willingness to do so cheerfully.

Giving because you expect to be given something in return

It is common to see people jamming interments in Africa. Most do not attend those memorial services because they loved the deceased; they attend because they want to be seen. It is believed if you do not attend people's committal none would attend your own. The crowds at a burial gathering are consequently not to give the bereaved condolence willingly, but to give expecting to be given the same condolence in return. Such giving would never help anybody reach his ultimate desire.

Of late we have also seen organizations taking seriously what they call corporate social responsibility. In layman's language, it is giving back to the community. The corporate social responsibility takes a great chunk of financial reporting nowadays. If you pick a financial report of any organization, you are likely to remember the social responsibility reporting than the financial statement. This is because it is full of coloured pictures of the organizations staff giving donations to communities which include; soap, cooking fat or oil, maize flour or wheat, beans and other foodstuffs.

Since such corporate responsibility is intended to enhance customer loyalty, it is a form of advertisement and it is also a tax

allowable expense. It has no long term value to the business. Such giving will not enhance continuity and success of the business in the long term, it is short lived. Some people are camera shy; taking their cameras holding donations may even cause them to shun the company.

There is a successful entrepreneur who opened a non-governmental organization to help the less fortunate in the community. He managed to solicit funds abroad. Since he also owned a church, it was common for children to visit his home every Sunday wearing their Sunday best. He took photographs of the kids and sent the pictures to donors claiming he bought clothes for the kids. The kids loved him since they knew every Sunday, they would drink a bottle of soda, have some cookies and a photo session.

But the man used the money donors sent him to educate his kids in expensive schools, build himself a house and other personal purposes. At that time grass was becoming more expensive as it was not easy to get thatching grass due to population explosion. For that reason many people were switching to iron sheets as roofing using iron sheets was becoming cheaper. In the village therefore, you could see a pattern of grass thatched houses and iron sheets roofs almost in the ratio of one to one.

The donors to this man decided to pay a visit to Kenya. In his intelligence, he took them around the village greeting the

villagers introducing them to the donors. Then telling the donors in English he funded the iron roofed houses. The locals did not understand English so he won the hearts of the Donors for raising the standards of living in his village. But one child who understood English heard him and told his parents what he had heard when the man and donors had gone away. On Sunday no one attended his church. The church was shut permanently. The giving he was giving children with a hope of benefiting from them for a long time was short-lived.

If you scanned social media, you would see some content creators giving foodstuffs and warm clothes to the homeless. Naturally such videos attract millions of views with thousands of favourable comments. Only few negative comments of people who hate the content creator may dot here and there. Most of the content creators are celebrities.

Such kind of giving would not help one accomplish all he ever sought through munificence. It may endear fans to the celebrity, or it may help the celebrity monetize his content, but that is the only reward. Jesus said so when you give to the needy; do not announce it with trumpets as the hypocrites do in synagogues and on the streets to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

When giving is done by anybody and it is highly publicized through any mainstream media or social media, the giver gets his reward instantly. People would praise him, he would feel

good because of the praise, he may monetize his content on social media but such giving would not give him desires like peace of mind. It would not give him sense of direction. It would not make him successful. In the long run, people will start saying the giver is laughing at the plight of the poor and start shunning him.

Using giving as a bait

Politicians usually give as a bait. They expect to trap you into voting or supporting them. Men or women may give someone of the opposite gender gifts or money to lure them into coitus activities. The gifts are commonly known as 'fare' and the giver called 'sponsor'- traditionally, sugar daddies/ sugar mummies. Such giving would not help one accomplish all he ever sought through munificence. It is similar to giving and expecting something in return. It is equal to buying and selling.

Further Reading: Bible verses Quoted directly or indirectly

Matthew 6:5-8; 16-18
Deuteronomy 15:11
Proverbs 19:17
2 Thessalonians 3:10
Leviticus 19:9, 10
Matthew 26:7-11
Micah 3:5
Deuteronomy 26:12
1 Corinthians 9:9

1 Timothy 5:18
Matthew 6:2-4

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If you have a desire to be successful in life, to be financially independent, to be happy, to have meaningful relationships, to be satisfied in life and to have peace of mind, it all starts with giving.

You have to give appropriately to achieve each and every objective in your life and you will be surprised you do not have to give out money. Money is one of the rewards of giving. There are laws that govern every aspect of human life. It is upon one to identify them and exploit them by giving.

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The writer shows that giving is not easy, in fact it is painful for most people. Majority of the people would only give out if they are sure they would get a return on what they gave out. When one expects to get something in return for what he gave out, that is not giving. Such kind of giving would never help someone to accomplish all he ever sought. It is like hiding a seed, then retrieving it after some time. It is different to planting a seed.

Since giving is painful to most people, the writer is of the view, that is the very reason why only few people are successful in life. Hope you will enjoy reading this book and tap **The Power of Giving** to be among the few who accomplish all they ever sought through munificence.

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