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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Terumah – A Generous Heart

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Terumah, which is Hebrew for “heave offering,” and it goes from Exodus 25:1 to Exodus 27:19

This Torah portion gives the instructions concerning the Tabernacle and its furnishings.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to talk about giving.

In this week’s Torah Portion, God told Moses to invite the Israelites to give toward the construction of the Sanctuary in which God’s presence would dwell among the people.

Exodus 25:2

Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.

This was a free-will offering. The contribution was to be taken from each one “whose heart moves him.” In other words, God wanted his people to give toward the Sanctuary, but more than that, he wanted them to *want* to give. God wanted his people to be moved in their hearts to give toward seeing his will and purposes accomplished.

This idea of giving from the heart is repeated in the New Testament:

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

God desires his people to be cheerful givers. The Scriptures say he “loves” such people. But a lot of us, if we’re honest, struggle with this. We know we’re called to be generous. We know we ought to support ministers, give to the poor, and so forth—and many of us do. But we aren’t *cheerful* about it. How do we

change?

First, we might consider examining our hearts—doing some introspection—and asking ourselves why we might feel that way. There are several possible reasons.

To mention one, when it comes to giving toward ministry, a lot of us are hesitant because we've seen how false teachers and scammers have exploited the biblical principles of giving for their own selfish gain. Prosperity preachers twist the Bible and make empty promises of divine healing and wealth if you just sow into their “ministries”—that is, their businesses. It's depressing and maddening to see how false teachers prey on vulnerable, desperate people just to make a buck.

On the other hand, the Bible still endorses generosity and giving toward ministry, and we can't throw that out just because false teachers have taught a distorted version of this biblical value. The lesson we ought to take from this is that we shouldn't give to *false teachers*! But we can't use those false teachers as an excuse to not cheerfully support true, faithful ministers who are in it for God's glory and not themselves.

Another reason many of us aren't cheerful about giving is that we can't afford to. This is a very real struggle that a lot of people have. Many of us can barely pay our *own* bills, let alone give to ministry or others in need. The mere thought of giving stresses us out.

First, the solution to this problem is not less giving; it's *more* giving! That is to say, those *who are able to give more* could be cheerfully giving more to those in need. Local fellowships could have a benevolent fund to help members within the community who are struggling financially, maybe helping pay for repairs if a family's car breaks down or for groceries until they're able to get back on their feet. This would help relieve the financial stress that many families face, enabling people to give more.

In any case, if you're struggling, it's very simple: just give what you're able to. That might just be a dollar one week or twenty dollars another week. Don't stress out about it or feel bad that you aren't able to give more. Yeshua said that the poor widow who was moved to give two copper coins to the temple treasury *gave more* than the rich people who contributed large sums (Mark 12:41-44). Again, it's all about the heart behind the giving.

If you struggle with being cheerful in your giving, ask God to give you a heart of generosity. Look at the greatest giver this world has ever known: Yeshua the Messiah. He gave everything for us, and we are to follow his example.

In addition to praying for God to work on your heart, what might you do to become a cheerful giver? Well, maybe look at your giving toward God's work and to others as an act of worship. Like many things in the Bible, becoming someone who loves to be generous is a gradual transformation that happens with practice.

Many of us who keep the Sabbath might recall what it was like when we first started. If we didn't grow up keeping the Sabbath, it wasn't easy or natural to rest on the seventh day—to change our routine and to give up what we wanted to do every week. But over time, we grew to love the Sabbath and look forward to it. It's the same thing with giving. We give as we can as an act of worship, and over time, God changes our heart to the point that we are excited for the opportunity.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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