

# GIFTS FROM MEN

Giving will make you happy: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35b)  
And it's always nice, of course, to receive gifts. That's a win-win: happy in giving and happy in receiving!

## MAKING OPPORTUNITIES

"A man's gift makes room for him, And brings him before great men" (Prov 18:16). A gift opens or enlarges (hiphil of *rahab*) space in a crowded room to stand before great men and kings.

## MAKING FRIENDS BY GIVING GIFTS ( GENEROSITY)

"A gift in secret subdues anger. . . (Prov 21:14a; e.g., *Abigail's gift*: "let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord" (1 Sam 25:27).

*Or Jacob's gift to Esau*: "Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have plenty.' Thus he urged him and he took it" (Gen 33:11).

*But giving gifts does not always subdue anger*: "He will not accept any ransom, Nor will he be content though you give many gifts" (Prov. 6:34–35; e.g., *after the rape of Dinah*, "Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift. . . But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor, with deceit, and spoke to them, because he had defiled Dinah their sister" Gen 34:11–13).

*Political gifts*: "Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, 'Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD'" (1 Sam 30:26; cf. 30:22–25). "Then the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his princes and his servants; he also made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts according to the king's bounty" (Esth 2:18). The word for "banquet" (*hanaha*) indicates the king temporarily freed his subjects from taxation, military service, or both—a nice political gift (cf. Herodotus 3.67).

## GIFTS OF APPRECIATION

*For deliverance*: "And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter" (2 Chr 32:23).

## PARTING GIFTS

*To make Isaac more secure*: "but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east" (Gen 25:6).

## GIFTS AS REWARDS FOR EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE

"But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation" (Dan 2:6; cf. 2:27).

"Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon" (Dan 2:48; cf. 2:28).

## BRAGGING ABOUT GIFTS

*Bragging falsely raises expectations and leaves disappointment*: "Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely" (Prov 25:14). This is emblematic parallelism.

## DECLINING GIFTS

*Because the king will not be pleased with his interpretation of the handwriting on the wall*: "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, 'Keep your gifts for yourself, or give your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription to the king and make the interpretation known to him'" (Dan 5:17; cf. 5:22–28). Daniel received the gifts anyway (compare 5:16 with 5:29).

## CHARITABLE GIFTS

*Purim Festival in Persia celebrating the deliverance of the Jews from Haman*: "because on those days the Jews rid themselves of their enemies, and it was a month which was turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and rejoicing and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor" (Esth 9:22).

## GIFTS GIVEN TO GOD

*Everyone should bring gifts to God*: "Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared" (Psa 76:11).

*Gifts from gentile Kings*: "Because of Your temple at Jerusalem Kings will bring gifts to You" (Psa 68:29; so the Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings 10:1–10).

*Desired by God*: "'For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel,' declares the Lord GOD, 'there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I shall accept them, and there I shall seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things'" (Ezek 20:40).

*Rejected by God*: "As for My sacrificial gifts, They sacrifice the flesh and eat it, But the LORD has taken no delight in them. Now He will remember their iniquity, And punish them for their sins; They will return to Egypt" (Hos 8:13; cf. Ezek 20:26, 31, 39). God had no delight in these sacrifices because they were mixed with rebellion.

*God gives His gifts to the levitical priests*: "All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you," (Num 18:19).

*Excess in times of revival*: "And the sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah, also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed them in heaps. . . . Since the contributions began to be brought into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat with plenty left over. . ." (2 Chr 31:6–10).