

GOD IS: GREATEST GIVER

Does your garden need a rain? Consider how God designed our ecosystem: surface water evaporates, condenses, precipitates, replenishes, and recycles. God gives it all. In His watershed, are you a reservoir or a river? That's a great question when you consider what you do with what God gives YOU.

1- RECEIVE - what do you get in relationship with God? As Creator, all things belong to God. Romans 11:36 says "*O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.*" From Him, we exist by the sovereign will of God, source of all things. Through Him, the sovereign activity of God, the means of all things. To Him, the sovereign glory of God, the goal of all things. Psalm 36 says, "*how precious is Your steadfast love, O God. The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings; You give them drink from the river of Your delights, for with You is the fountain of life.*" And 1Corinthians 4:7 nails it, "*What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*" Everything. No limits.

God is the giver of all things, physical and spiritual. Everything comes from Him and is "yours" for His purposes. We humans imagine we're the products of our own efforts and resourcefulness and goodness. Why were you born here? Not Syria, India, Peru, Haiti, Guam, Africa? Did you somehow deserve to be born in this place and time, living in the wealthiest nation at the most opportune time in world history? Poor as you are, you live better than ancient kings. Half of all Americans live on over \$50 per day; over half the rest of the world on less than \$2 per day. God blesses you to bless others.

2- RESPONSE - what is your attitude of gratitude? All you are and have come from God, by His grace. Your response? 2Corinthians 8:9 says, "*for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.*" Put worldly wealth in perspective. Only spiritual wealth matters. "Some people are so poor all they have is money." What counts are God's riches of grace in glory in Christ (Ephesians 1). True treasures laid up in heaven far surpass mere physical trinkets valued by the "health-wealth-prosperity gospel." God doesn't bless you just to soak it up like a sponge. You are to "*excel in the grace of giving*" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

You are blessed by God so your whole life is lived from Him, through Him, for Him. All He gives is to be received in gratitude. Then in response, passed on to others. An attitude of gratitude. In right relationship with Christ, by grace through faith. Then doing the good works He prepared you for (Ephesians 2:8-10). So your life reflects His life in and through you. In response to His unlimited resources flowing to you, over-flowing to others. AW Tozer said, "remember, my giving will be rewarded not by how much I gave but by how much I had left." John Wesley gave it all away, dying at age 87 with only a few coins.

3- RELEASE - how do God's blessings overflow from you? Your life was never meant to be a reservoir of God's goodness, just storing it up for yourself, hoarding His blessings. Scripture presents God's grace as a never-ending flow of blessings, an ever over-flowing river of grace. God's providence comes in order to bless others with His flow. Both physical and spiritual blessings. Dividends of laying up your treasures in heaven endure because true values are eternal. 1Timothy 6:18 says "*don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy... to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for yourself for the future, to take hold of that which is truly life.*" Not your comfort and convenience, but His kingdom. Growing God's family with overflowing good news about Jesus. Splash His grace all around!

Sow sparingly and you reap sparingly. 2Corinthians 9:8 says "*God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. You will be enriched in every way, supplying the saints and also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.*" God gives. You overflow. He gives again. Revelation 22 speaks of "*the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*" God is a giver. Like a river of grace. You're not meant to be a reservoir, but a river, growing ever larger as He blesses, as you over-flow more of all He gives. Time, talents, treasures. All released to Him for His kingdom purposes. Forever glory!