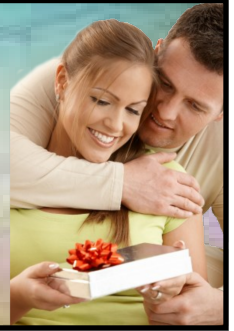


# Giving:

Provide for voluntarily & without expecting compensation.



When someone speaks of giving, it usually brings to mind money or possibly giving presents. But the Bible defines love as *giving*. (1John 3:16) Jesus Christ *gave* Himself for us. Yes, we are to give money to help the poor and support the church. Yes, we give presents, not only on holidays, but at other times to express love or appreciation. More important is the giving of *ourselves*—the providing for others voluntarily and without expecting anything in return. That is what Christ did for us and frankly, that is what He expects of us.

It is not a matter of giving because we have to; when we give out of compulsion, it's not really giving. Notice the “voluntarily” part of the definition. We are to give, because God has given to us. It is a matter of the heart. Do we have a “giving” heart? Do we desire to give of ourselves? Our time, money, talents, abilities? Paul wrote in 1Corinthians that we can give everything we have, even our bodies; but if we don't have love, it all means nothing. Our giving should come from our love for God and our love for people.

A giving attitude changes people for the better. They become less selfish with their possessions. Studies show that “givers” are happier and even healthier. Life isn't about them. Hmmm, sounds like Jesus saying that His purpose was to do the will of His Father. Jesus didn't come to earth to be served, but to serve and *give* His life for mankind. Oh, that the Church—the Body of Christ—would have such an attitude. Marriages and families would improve, as would our communities and possibly our nation. Then, perhaps, we Christians would be a testimony for Christ to a lost and dying world.

We have never counseled a couple where one spouse gave too much. In fact, in those couples we counsel, selfishness seems to be the rule. It may not be overt, but for whatever reason, one or both will not give to their spouse. They focus on other things or withhold love in some form or do not give of themselves to connect with their spouse. The human condition is selfish; the problem is that it is the flesh and not the Spirit working in people. Folks, we have got to stop being so selfish and die to self and give to our spouses! We are to give as Christ has given—everything! Give to your spouse every day—seek even to out give him or her.

**Helpful Resources:** *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

**Articles to check out:**

**5 Ways Giving Is Good for You** by Jason Marsh and Jill Suttie - [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)

**Christmas is About** by Chris Garner - [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)