# Giving and Sharing

**A gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it:**

**Whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.**

 ***(Proverbs 17:8)***

**The Bureau of the Public Debt received $3.1 million in gifts last year from Americans volunteering to help retire the nation’s $13.4 trillion debt. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 8, 2010)***

**Bonobos have what was thought to be a uniquely human trait: they share. Researchers in Congo tested the great apes by placing one bonobo in a room that had food and another bonobo in an empty room next-door. The one with the food usually invited the other over for a bite to eat. (Chimpanzees, a closely related species, don’t do this.) Bonobo generosity wasn’t dependent on kinship, pressure or past favors, instead the animals may have expected a favor in return or they may have had “a more altruistic invitation.” *(T. A. Frail, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Two small boys in front of me were walking slowly, deep in conversation, when they stopped to share an apple. “You cut and I’ll choose,” said one to the other. A penknife appeared, the cut was made and the choice decided. What a splendid way of ensuring an apple is equally shared! Perhaps this world could get along with fewer conferences and agreements, I reflected, if only the powers that be had the simple solution that schoolboys worked out centuries ago. (Francis Gay, in Sunday Post, Glasgow)**

**The world is full of Good Samaritans; you’ll find many of them in your own body. James J. Collins, a biologist at Boston University, has found that small numbers of drug-resistant bacteria help their vulnerable counterparts survive antibiotic onslaughts, even at a cost to themselves. When they periodically analyzed the levels of drug resistance in the colony, they saw something unexpected: although the entire population was thriving in the presence of the drug, only a few individual bacteria were actually resistant. Further analysis revealed that the resistant mutants were secreting a molecule called indole that thwarts their own growth but helps the rest of the population survive by activating drug-export pumps on the bacterial cell membranes. *(Melinda Wenner Moyer, in Scientific American)***

**When one bacterium encounters another, it often extends a threadlike tube to the other through which it exchanges secondhand genes in the form of plasmids, rings of non-nuclear DNA. If one bacterium survives assault by a new antibiotic, it can quickly share its method of resistance by passing plasmids that contain such information to other bacteria. Through such sharing, antibiotic resistance spreads swiftly through the microscopic world. (Lowell Ponte, in Reader's Digest)**

**A book is one of the few gifts you can give which can be opened more than once. (Catherine Ponder, in Keys to Prosperity)**

**One sweltering day, I was scooping ice cream into cones and told my four children they could “buy” a cone from me for a hug. Almost immediately, the kids lined up to make their purchases. The three youngest each gave me a quick hug, grabbed their cones and raced back outside. But when my teen-age son at the end of the line finally got his turn to “buy” his ice cream, he gave two hugs. “Keep the change,” he said with a smile. (Nancy Gallets, in Reader's Digest)**

**Caregivers also need care. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**You may give gifts without caring – but you can’t care without giving. *(Frank A. Clarke, Register and Tribune Syndicate)***

**In nothing do men more nearly approach the gods than in doing good to their fellow men. (Cicero)**

**What Christopher Columbus did for the world, says the gourmet, is give potatoes to Ireland, chocolate to Switzerland, pineapples to Hawaii and tomato sauce to Italy. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Understand it was Indians who taught colonial Bostonians to cook beans in earthen pots. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own. (Benjamin Disraeli)**

**Few people ever get dizzy from doing too many good turns. (Kansas City, Missouri, The Independent)**

**What it would cost annually to duplicate what earth does naturally: Naturalflood control --would cost $1.8 trillion; plant pollination --would cost $117 billion; waste treatment --would cost $2.27 trillion; soil creation --would cost $53 billion; ocean processing of chemicals --would cost $17 trillion. (University of Stockholm Department of Systems Ecology)**

**Elvis Presley did not die with a fortune; he spent nearly all he made. The stories are legion: Elvis standing beside two daydreaming newlyweds in a Cadillac showroom. “Which one do you like?” he asks. They point and he says, “Get in, it's yours.” Or the young Elvis, a skinny kid with ridiculous sideburns, brushed off by the salesman, going out to ask an elderly man washing down new models, “Caddy a good car?” The man nods. Elvis marches him up to the sales manager and says, “This gentleman sold me on that convertible over there, so I'm buying two, one for me and one for him. And he's to have commission on both.” Every Christmas he gave $1000 each to 50 Memphis charities, but no one will ever know the number of people whose businesses he rescued, or the tornado victims to whom he sent house trailers or the destitute whose hospital bills he paid. He thought that's what money was for. (Lawrence Elliott, in Reader's Digest)**

**One of the most unusually-named holidays in the world is celebrated in England on December 26. It’s called “Boxing Day” – but it has nothing to do with fighting. Boxing Day is when people in England give boxes of gifts to those who served them during the year. England has two distinct gift days – Christmas, for gifts to family and friends, and Boxing Day, the day after Christmas, for gifts to others. Boxing Day sounds tough, but it’s not. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 227)***

**Years later, the woman described the incident: “When dinner was served, Mr. Fillmore, like any father serving his little girl who was hungry, took a spoon and served half his dish of berries to me. Then, when I was about to leave, without my asking, he let me have twenty dollars to help me with my expenses and carried me back to Kansas City in his pretty new red car.” (James Dillet Freeman, in The Story of Unity, p. 148)**

**The day of her party, Nancy sat with friends gathered round her and slowly, gratefully, opened every present. There was a beautiful scarf, and she tried it on, relishing the luxury of the silk. She opened a candle and inhaled the delicate floral scent. Then she laid all her presents out on the table and looked around at her friends. “Right now I'm not in a gathering period in my life; I'm in a relinquishing period, and I’m learning how beautiful this can be. What I want for you each to do now is select a gift that you didn't bring and take that gift home with you. All the years you live, remember my love for you whenever you see this gift.” Nancy died six weeks later. Maybe her days were fewer than she and her friends and family would have liked, yet her life was abundantly full. (Mary Manin Morrissey, in Building Your Field of Dreams , p. 137)**

**Something to chew on: As a public relations move, William Wrigley, Jr. sent 4 free sticks of gum to every person listed in the U.S. phone book in 1915. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 101)***

**Sometimes the best helping hand you can get is a good, firm push. (JoAnn Thomas, in Door County, Wisconsin, Advocate)**

**The honey ant of the desert has an unusual method of providing food in times of scarcity. Certain members of the colony are stuffed with liquid food or water until the rear portions of their bodies are enlarged to the size of a pea. When a famine occurs, these ants disgorge their supplies to feed the others. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 87)**

**Proof that life depends on interspecies sharing can be found in our own bodies. Inside the nucleus of every living cell sits the great genetic library of DNA molecules, the genes. But in the watery world surrounding its nucleus, each cell also contains other DNA, some of it found in several bean-shaped structures called mitochondria, which turn sugar into cellular fuel. (Lowell Ponte, in Reader’s Digest)**

**Earth’s debt to Jupiter: The massive planet Jupiter serves as a cosmic sentinel, sucking in comets and asteroids that might otherwise make catastrophic direct strikes on Earth, new research indicates. Amateur astronomers recently caught Jupiter in the act, spotting a bright flash on the planet’s surface that was probably an asteroid striking the gas giant. “Jupiter has been taking hits like this for a long time,” astronomer Franck Marchis tells New Scientist. Most of those strikes have not been spotted, because professional astronomers usually train their large, expensive telescopes on stars, galaxies, and more distant objects, rather than on planets. But as amateur telescopes get more sophisticated, Jupiter’s protective role has become clearer; four asteroid strikes have been observed in just the past three years. The strikes suggest that Jupiter acts as “a big gravitational vacuum cleaner” for asteroids and comets that would otherwise continue on a collision course with our planet, says NASA scientist Glenn Orton. Experts say Jupiter may sustain an asteroid impact as often as once a week. Earth, by comparison, can expect a mass-extinction-causing asteroid to strike just once every 100 million years. The last such strike, which caused the demise of the dinosaurs as the planet’s dominant species, came 65 million years ago. *(The Week magazine, October 5, 2012)***

**Love and time -- those are the only two things in all the world and in all of life that cannot be bought, but only spent. (Gary Jennings, in Aztec)**

**Seventy percent of the world’s oxygen supply is produced by marine plants. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 148)***

**As Mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia liked to keep in touch with all the various departments under him. Often he would fill in for the department heads or officeholders as a way of accomplishing this. One time he chose to preside over Night Court. It was a cold winter night and a trembling man was brought before him charged with stealing a loaf of bread. His family, he said, was starving. “I have to punish you,” declared La Guardia. “There can be no exceptions to the law. I fine you ten dollars.” As he said this, however, The Little Flower was reaching into his own pocket for the money. He tossed the bill into his famous sombrero. “Here's the ten dollars to pay your fine -- which I now remit,” he said. “Furthermore,” he declared, “I'm going to fine everybody in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a city where a man has to steal bread in order to eat. Mr. Bailiff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant!” The hat was passed and the incredulous man, with a smile on his face, left the courtroom with a stake of $47.50. (Bits & Pieces)**

**The parents of a young man killed in the war gave their church a check for $200 as a memorial to their loved one. When the presentation was made, another war mother whispered to her husband, “Let's give the same for our boy.” “What are you talking about?” asked the father. “Our boy didn't lose his life.” “That's just the point,” replied the mother. “Let's give it because he was spared.” (Watchman-Examiner)**

**Giving is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament. It's one of the most talked about subjects, running neck and neck with the Second Coming. (Johnston/Rank, in God Can Make It Happen, p. 77)

The warm glow of paying taxes: People actually get some pleasure out of paying their taxes, says a new study. Researchers at the University of Oregon hooked up 19 students to brain monitors, gave them $100 each, and then told them they could give some of the money away to charity. That caused the part of the brain associated with pleasure to light up. This “warm glow” effect of altruism has been demonstrated before. But Oregon researchers were surprised to see that the pleasure centers also revved up when the students were told they had to give some of the money away for “taxes.” Researchers said that the pleasure people derive from giving extends even to compulsory giving. “I don’t think that most economists would have suspected that,” professor Ulrich Mayr tells the London Telegraph. “I’ve heard people claim that they don’t mind paying taxes, if it’s for a good cause – and here we showed that you can actually see this going on in the brain, and even measure it.” (The Week magazine, July 13, 2007)**

**What is the pope’s salary? When a ranking cardinal wins an election to the Seat of Saint Peter, he earns, in effect, a promotion – but with a reduction in pay to zero. Incredible but true. The Holy Father receives not a penny in pay. Also astonishing: The pope does not have a bank account. (Nino Lo Bello, in The Incredible Book of Vatican Facts and Papal Curiosities, p. 27)**

**The twin Popsicle was created during the Depression so that two children could share a single treat. *(Russ Edwards & Jack Kreismer, in The Bathroom Trivia Digest, p. 59)***

**The elegant songwriter Cole Porter was noted for his lavish gift-giving. One Christmas, he gave more lavishly than he himself realized. He bought twenty paintings from a little old lady who lived near his estate. Years later, after fame came to the elderly painter, twenty of Porter's friends discovered they owned original paintings by Grandma Moses. (Isaac Asimov's Book of Facts, p. 51)**

**It is not enough merely to exist. It’s not enough to say, “I’m earning enough to support my family. I do my work well. I’m a good father, husband, churchgoer.” That’s all very well. But you must do something more. Seek always to do some good, somewhere. Every man has to seek in his own way to realize his true worth. You must give some time to your fellow man. Even if it’s a little thing, do something for those who need help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For remember, we don’t live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here too. (Albert Schweitzer)**

**Some things are so emotionally overwhelming that we have to tell somebody. One evening the father of poet Emily Dickinson hurried to the church in Amherst, MA, and pulled the bell rope. The villagers rushed from their homes. What was the alarm? Fire? Accident? It was neither. Mr. Dickinson, overcome by beauty, was summoning everyone to admire a sunset too magnificent to keep to himself. (Bits & Pieces)**

**If you give money, spend yourself with it. (Henry David Thoreau)**

**Some years ago a small boy about ten years old entered a restaurant and sat at the counter. The waitress went over and put a glass of water in front of him. “How much is an ice cream sundae?” he asked. “Fifty cents,” replied the waitress. The little fellow pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins clutched in it. “How much is a dish of plain ice cream?” he asked. There were many people waiting at the counter, and the waitress was slightly impatient. “Thirty-five cents,” she said brusquely. Again he counted the coins. “I'll have the plain ice cream,” he said. The waitress took his money, brought the ice cream, put it in front of him, and walked away. When she returned a few minutes later, the boy was gone. She stared at the empty dish and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish were two nickels and five pennies -- her tip. (Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living magazine)

Dolly says to the other children: “If grownups learned to share their toys, we wouldn’t have so many wars.” (Bil Keane, in The Family Circus comic strip)

 It has long been known that trees enhance rainfall by cooling the land, slowing wind evaporation and erosion, and transpiring water into the sky from their leaves. An acre of large, healthy maples, for instance, puts 20,000 gallons of water into the air each day. Without trees our entire world would be a much drier place. (Lowell Ponte, in Reader's Digest)**

**On October 10, 1951, President Harry Truman signed the Mutual Security Act, announcing to the world that the U.S. was prepared to provide military aid to “free peoples,” with an increase in military assistance to democratic nations. President Dwight Eisenhower abolished the Mutual Security Act in 1953. *(MOMENTS IN TIME – The History Channel)***

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