

RUSSELL SANDERS

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TO GIVE AND BE GIVEN – LESSON 1

ALMS

The Bible has much to say about giving. Sometimes it is about how we are to give. Other times it is about what we are given. In this series we will look at numerous aspects relating to giving.

Alms is defined as giving to the poor and needy. It may be money, food, or various items. We often call it charity. The bible speaks of giving alms. It helps widows, orphans, the homeless, the sick, and anyone in dire circumstances. We may give it to them directly or by contributing to a mission or church or organization that helps such people.

James 1:7 says, ***“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction...”***. To “visit” them is to meet their needs, not merely a social call. Helping the needy is a show of our love in Christ. It is a vital part of the “works” of a believer and counts for a reward in heaven.

James also writes about how we demonstrate our faith versus those who count on their good works to get to heaven without faith. It says in James 2:17-18 (NKJV), ***“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”*** If your faith on Jesus is true, you will desire to please Him in all things. How so?

Jesus’ number one commandment was “to love.” I Corinthians 13 speaks of that love in detail; without it, we sound as empty as tinkling brass. Our testimony is hollow and empty. Our love is shown in how we treat all people, especially the lowly.

Jesus spoke of alms giving in Matthew 6:1-4. He said (v. 4) ***“that thine alms may be (given) in secret (discreetly). And thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.”*** Verses 1-3 show Jesus rebuking the religious leaders for making a big show of their alms giving so that people would think highly of them. God gives no reward for such prideful acts. True alms are given from a heart of compassion (the expression of Godly love).

Tomorrow we shall look at another aspect related to alms which we call offerings. It is another way of showing our love for the Lord and for the lost souls.