

It's a Blessing to Give

by Dr. Celeste Owens

In October I had the pleasure of presenting a portion of my story to 300 middle school girls. A wise parent of one of the 8th graders had organized this assembly as she was concerned that the girls were losing their way.

I spoke to them about tenacity, endurance, and courage; how giving up is not an option even when faced with impossible odds. For example, although my parents were unable to save for college I knew that I would go because I had heard the call. In fact, it was in the 7th grade that God placed in my spirit that I would be a psychologist. So armed with that realization I pursued that dream until it was a reality. Even without a college fund I obtained 3 degrees without needing to pay a cent. God is good.

That evening following my presentation, I received this lone note: “Hi. I just wanted to thank you for coming to my school today. You really did inspire me. I have my dreams back. I want to be a veterinarian or a singer and I hope to achieve my dreams.”

How amazing is that? The simple act of sharing my story changed another's life. Indeed it is a blessing to give.

Are you also feeling the call to give back? Then do it. Even if you're busy, you must make the time; it's that important. I, too, have other pressing agenda items (e.g., being a wife and mom of two) but giving back is what I must do for a number of reasons.

First, the sacrificial giving of my love, time, and effort demonstrates to others that the love of God is active in my life. In fact, the best indicator that one is Christian is that he loves. John 13:35 reads, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Love is more than mere words, it's demonstrative. When we love—we give. It's that simple. The writer John supports this truth with these words, “For God so loved the world that he gave...” (John 3:16a). From this portion of a very familiar scripture the character and nature of God can be summed. Thus, if we are His children and made in His image, we are to do as He does, we are to give.

Second, I have a responsibility to give because I have been blessed in a mighty way. “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48). Therefore out of my abundance I give back to men, not grudgingly or of necessity but with a joyful heart, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Lastly, the act of giving brings with it many wonderful blessings. As the old song goes, *you can't beat God giving, no matter how hard you try*. The scripture reads, “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your

bosom” (Luke 6:38a). If you are looking for a blessing, seek to be a blessing. The seeds that you plant today will reap an abundant harvest.

Therefore, vow in your heart today to give back; not just at Christmas but the whole year through. My simple sacrifice of spending a few hours with those girls in October changed at least one life. You, too, can make a similar difference. Don’t just take my word for it let Christ be your perfect example. He made the ultimate sacrifice; He gave His life so that we might live.

Now it’s your turn. Die to yourself, give back, and watch someone forever changed by your testimony and generosity. Indeed it is blessing to give.