

Back to the Books – Season 2 – **Week 5**
Give – for giving is living.... Matthew verses

Over the last month or more, we have focused on the Beatitudes with the theme **Blessed to be a Blessing**. I know, for me, it has been very helpful to just say the word 'Blessed...' and then a whole series of verses come to mind...mostly in order.. but some are more pronounced than others in my memory. It has reminded me (again), just how truly Blessed we, as a nation, as a people, and as a church have been blessed.... **So, now what?** For some, they not only count their every blessing, they put them in boxes, bags, banks, or vaults to make sure they don't lose a single one of them. They get the 'blessed' part but they miss the 'to be a blessing' which is the greater emphasis and which is the most fun. Next we are going to focus on the word GIVE (and its variations). So the theme is **"Give – for giving is living."**

When I did the Bible search (in the RSV), there were more than 1500 verses or references to the word 'give'. While I did not read each one of them, I did review many from the Old and New Testaments. Then, I realized that we could learn a lot about Giving right there in Matthew, starting only a few verses beyond where we left off in Matthew 5:

Let's start our journey into giving in Matthew 5:16 **"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."** (RSV)

We have discussed in recent Bible Studies some of the current people who are making headlines... famous people...people in the media who others may look up to or who may even idolize, to some degree, who have been and are making terrible personal choices on habits, behaviors, and lifestyles which in prior generations in our culture would not have been tolerated...at their level or positions. Now, it seems to be just another story... like so many others... that we don't even pay much attention to it. Contrast that with this verse from Matt 5:16. 3 simple phrases in one sentence... (repeat the verse)...

**16 "Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works and
give glory to your Father who is in heaven."**

As we read in the first sentence of **The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren..."It's not about you." We quickly come to realize that our "light" is only a reflection of what Jesus has done and is doing in our lives. He is the Light of the World. Our "good works" are only the outcome of his outpouring of love, mercy, grace and forgiveness so that we can be free to be... to be a blessing to others. And if we do that, those simple but oh so difficult tasks, people will notice.. they will be amazed... they will realize that our lives are not our own.. that we belong to something and someone MUCH bigger than what is happening here and now... and they will GIVE glory to God and thanks for His hand that placed us,

