

Why Giving is Better Than Receiving

By Whitney Stager, M. S.

Many of you have heard the famous statement made by John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." This is a moving statement. Whenever I hear it, I feel patriotic - ready to say yes to do something, anything for my country! Perhaps you feel similarly when you hear these famous words.

It is my hope that you feel strongly about the next statement, too. That it will move you to say, "yes - I want to do something!" I took the liberty of changing a few key words to JFK's statement, so here it is. "Ask not what your _____ (fill in the blank with God, spouse, child, friend, parent, boss, etc.) can do for you, but what you can do for them."

How did you react? Did you think of something positive right away? Did you think of even some little thing that you could do to really make another happy? Or was your reaction negative? Did you think, hey, wait a minute, when was the last time someone did something for me? How does God want us to respond to this statement? What is he calling us to do? Jesus said, "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". (Mt 25:40)

Once, I was counseling a couple that was struggling in this area. Each felt that they were the ones giving, while the other wasn't doing anything for them. This led to a very negative cycle that they were having trouble getting out of. Each was waiting for the other to be the first to "give".

Although there were many issues to resolve surrounding this issue, one task that they did stand out. I assigned each of them to make a list of things they liked to receive. For instance, the wife included compliments, help cleaning, and eating a weekly meal together. The husband then got to look over the list and pick one thing to "give" her each week from her list. He, in turn, wrote his list and she picked one thing a week to "give" to him.

One of the most important things we decided upon was that each one committed to doing one thing on the list, regardless of the other fulfilling their end of the bargain. This was so difficult because in our human weakness, we get caught up in giving with the expectation of getting. We must remember, however, that God calls us to be giving first and foremost. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

And so I challenge you to keep this saying in your heart. When you are questioning what God or others have done for you lately, turn it around, pray about what God is calling you to do, and "Ask not what your _____ can do for you, but what can you do for them."

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