

Devotion 10

Tuesday, Week 2

This Gift is For All—And All of Us Together

Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the Tent of Meeting [The Tabernacle]. . . .

. . . All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord free will offerings for all the work. (Exodus 35:20-21, 29)

Pastor Brad Cusson relates this experience: "I was in the fourth grade. My brother was in the eighth grade. We did everything together. One morning, a bunch of his eighth grade buddies came to the front door, wanting him to play some sandlot football. I was in the hallway where no one, including my brother, could see me, but I thought, "Yes, this will be fun!" My brother said, "Ok, I'll get my brother and we'll go"—to which his buddies replied, "Come on, don't take your little brother; leave him here." I can't tell you how rotten I felt because I really wanted to play, but I knew I would be left out because, obviously, I didn't have much to contribute as a fourth grade kid playing with eighth grade kids. Not wanting to embarrass my brother, I quietly started to back away when all of a sudden I heard my brother say, "If my brother doesn't go, I don't go." Man, that was wonderful! I was a part of things again and it felt great."

If you get a chance, take your Bible and read Exodus 35:20-36:7 from which our devotion verse is taken. As you read, you will see two themes interwoven. The first is indicated by the repetition of the word "willing." Over and over again, it is stated that all those who were WILLING (and whose HEART moved them) brought a love offering to the Lord. The second is indicated by the breakdown of who is giving and what they are giving (which is only what they have available to give). It talks about men and women, from leaders to those who could spin the goat's hair. It talks about craftsmen, designers, weavers, and the construction workers who would build the Tabernacle. It talks about gifts of gold, silver, and bronze as well as fine linen, olive oil, incense, and goat's hair. God gave to EACH ONE a willing heart and provided the means for EACH ONE to give a meaningful love offering for the building of the Tabernacle. To me the message is clear: God wants all of us to have the privilege of contributing to the mission.

This is the vision we have been given in our ministry expansion stewardship program. Just as our Heavenly Father gave His gifts to each one of His ancient people so that each one might know the joy of giving lovingly to Him, so too He has given His gifts to each one of us. We give from what God has given to us—certainly from the riches of who we are in Christ Jesus—but also from the ability and means He has given each of us as the God of all creation. Our prayer is that He would create in each of us, by His Spirit through His Word, a willing heart to bring our love offering to Him, so that each one of us—and all of us together—might experience this "grace of giving."

Brad got to play football that day. But he played as a fourth grader. It's all he had to give. But he got to play! God gives to each of us a willing heart . . . and the means to express it. He gives to each of us as He wills, according to His wisdom. BUT we all get to play! We all get to be a part of something none of us could do alone. We, all together, are blessed! Thanks be to God!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I pray that You would work in me a willing heart that I might be led to give to You lovingly and meaningfully from what You alone have given to me. Help me to see that I matter to You as You give me this privilege to give sacrificially. I pray this in the name of Jesus, who gave everything for me. Amen!