

Luke 6:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Analysis

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. This verse establishes the reciprocal principle of generosity. The command "Give" (didote, δίδοτε) is a present imperative, indicating continuous, habitual giving. The promise "it shall be given unto you" (dothēsetai hymin, δοθήσεται ὑμῖν) uses divine passive—God ensures return, though often through human agents.

The description of the return uses agricultural imagery from grain measurement. "Good measure" (metron kalon, μέτρον καλόν) indicates quality and quantity. "Pressed down" (pepiesmenon, πεπιεσμένον) describes compacting grain to fit more in the container. "Shaken together" (sesaleumenon, σεσαλευμένον) means shaking to eliminate air pockets and add more grain. "Running over" (hyperekchynnomenon, ὑπερεκχυννόμενον) depicts grain overflowing the container. "Into your bosom" (eis ton kolpon hymōn, εἰς τὸν κόλπον ὑμῶν) refers to the fold of the outer garment used as a pocket for carrying grain or money.

The concluding principle, "with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (hō gar metrō metreite antimetrēthēsetai hymin, ὃ γὰρ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν), establishes reciprocity. The verb metreō (μετρέω) means to measure out, apportion, or distribute. How we measure

generosity toward others determines how generosity is measured back to us. This operates both horizontally (social reciprocity) and vertically (divine recompense). Jesus promises abundant return for generosity—not necessarily material wealth, but spiritual blessing, eternal reward, and often material provision.

Historical Context

First-century Palestinian economy was primarily agricultural and operated on reciprocity and patronage systems. Wealthy landowners acted as patrons, providing for clients who offered loyalty and service in return. Hospitality was sacred obligation—refusing hospitality or failing to reciprocate could destroy social standing. Jesus' teaching on generosity operated within this cultural context but transcended it by promising divine, not merely social, reward.

Jewish teaching emphasized charity (tzedakah, from the Hebrew root meaning "righteousness"). The Torah commanded provision for the poor through gleaning laws (Leviticus 19:9-10), the sabbatical year (Deuteronomy 15:7-11), and the tithe for Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). Proverbs repeatedly promises blessing for generosity: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Proverbs 19:17).

Early Christian practice embodied radical generosity. Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-37 describe believers selling property to meet others' needs. Paul's collection for Jerusalem's poor (Romans 15:25-27, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4) demonstrated practical application of this principle. The Corinthian correspondence teaches that generous sowing produces generous reaping (2 Corinthians 9:6-11), echoing Jesus' teaching. Early Christians understood material generosity as both spiritual obedience and investment in eternal reward.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' promise of abundant return for generosity challenge both materialism and false asceticism?
2. What is the relationship between generosity toward others and experiencing God's provision in our own lives?
3. How can believers practice generosity motivated by love rather than by expectation of return?
4. In what ways does the 'same measure' principle apply to judgment, mercy, and forgiveness in addition to material generosity?
5. How should this verse shape Christian stewardship, budgeting, and attitudes toward money and possessions?

Interlinear Text

δώσουσιν	καὶ	δώσουσιν	ὑμῖν	μέτρῳ	καλὸν	πεπιεσμένον
Give	and	Give	to you	measure	good	pressed down
G1325	G2532	G1325	G5213	G3358	G2570	G4085
καὶ	σεσαλευμένον	καὶ	ὑπερεκχυνόμενον	δώσουσιν	εἰς	
and	shaken together	and	running over	Give	into	
G2532	G4531	G2532	G5240	G1325	G1519	
τὸν	κόλπον	ὑμῶν·	τῷ	γὰρ	αὐτῷ	μέτρῳ
bosom	your		For	with the same	measure	that
G3588	G2859	G5216	G1063	G846	G3358	G3739
μετρεῖτε	ἀντιμετρηθήσεται	ὑμῖν				
ye mete withal	again	to you				
G3354	G488	G5213				

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 15:10 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the

LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.

Mark 4:24 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

Matthew 7:2 (Parallel theme): For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Proverbs 22:9 (Parallel theme): He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 19:17 (Parallel theme): He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Proverbs 10:22 (Parallel theme): The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Luke 6:30 (Good): Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

Matthew 10:42 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

James 2:13 (Parallel theme): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Job 42:11 (Parallel theme): Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.