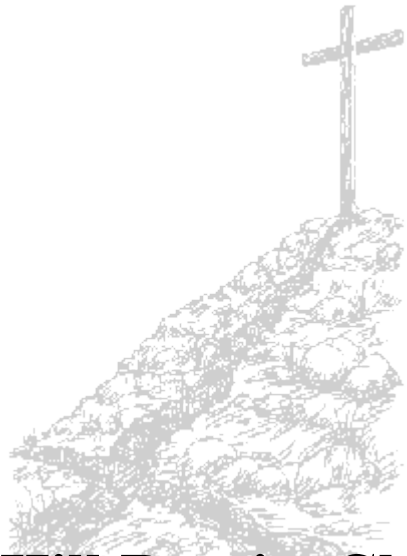


# Jubilee and the Sabbatical Year

Deuteronomy 15:1-17



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**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 15:1-17 (KJV) "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. {2} And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release. {3} Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; {4} Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: {5} Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. {6} For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. {7} If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: {8} But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. {9} Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. {10} 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. {11} For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. {12} And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. {13} And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: {14} Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. {15} And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. {16} And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; {17} Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise."



In America we have a wonderful system we call *capitalism*. When I looked for the definition of *capitalism* on the Internet I found a number of definitions, many of which I couldn't understand. The clearest definition I found was:

**"A system of production of goods and services for market exchange in order to make a profit. In a capitalist system of production the means of production are owned privately, by the capitalist**

**class (bourgeoisie). The working class (proletariat) sells their labor power to the owners of the means of production. Capitalism thus represents both an economic and a social system based on different social classes."**<sup>1</sup>

Now don't get me wrong - I think capitalism is a wonderful system, especially when you compare it to *communism*. You earn a living in this country based on that very system. However, it is possible to take that system we call *capitalism* and turn it into a god or a goddess that will draw you far away from your Savior. The Christian is warned against allowing riches to *control* his life. The clear warning the Apostle gave Timothy was:



**1 Timothy 6:7-8 (KJV) "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. {8} And having food and raiment let us be therewith content<sup>2</sup>."**

The Christian is commanded to *be satisfied* with *food and clothing*, the basic things of life - the things which psychologist **Abraham Maslow**<sup>3</sup> recognized as the *five basic categories of need* in humanity. Maslow merely recognized the truth that God established early on ... once we have food and clothing, once we are safe in God's Will, part of a Group that He approves of, once I have identity as one of His Children, then I am free to achieve the potential that He wants of me. But the Apostle warns Timothy:

1 from Trent University in California

2 Future Passive Indicative arkeo {pronounced ar-keh'-o}, *to be satisfied*

3 in his book *Toward a Psychology of Being, third edition*



**to one and despise the other You cannot serve God and wealth."**

When you begin to serve *wealth* more than you serve God this brings a natural *destruction* in the life of man. We were designed to serve and glorify God .... when we cease to do that, or become imbalanced in how we approach riches in our lives, then we will bring fragmentation between ourselves and God, ourselves and our families, and ourselves and our Church.

### **God's Control Of Wealth Through Sabbaths**

God promised His Covenant Israel that He would bless her as long as she remained focused on His Will. In order to prevent Israel from allowing *His Blessing* to eventually draw the nation away from serving Him God established a *series of Sabbaths* or a period of *rest and relief* to force His people from constantly chasing riches.

**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 15:1-3 (KJV) "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. {2} And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD'S release. {3} Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release .."

Israel not only rested on *the seventh day* of every week, but on *the seventh year* from the time of that nation's formation God demanded a *Sabbatical Year*. God first



**1 Timothy 6:9-10 (KJV) "But they that will be rich fall into temptation<sup>4</sup> and a snare<sup>5</sup>, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. {10} For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."**

When you go *beyond* your basic needs and allow money to become your god or to supplant your True God, then you fall into a *temptation<sup>4</sup>* and a *snare<sup>5</sup>*. Jesus warned us that:



**Luke 16:13 (NAS) "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted**

4 peirasmos {pronounced pi-ras-mos' }, *trials, an enticement to sin and degradation*

5 pagis {pronounced pag-ece' }, *that which brings loss, destruction, corruption*

commands the Sabbatical Year in:



**Exodus 23:10-11 (KJV) "And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: {11} But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive yard."**

The Sabbatical Year became a means whereby God insured that Israel practiced *good crop management* - they avoided over farming the land and destroying it. Further, it was a means whereby God made Israel *live out their faith*, trusting Him for provision during that year. God repeated the requirement of the Sabbatical Year in Leviticus 25:1-7, making sure that they understood that He expected them to trust Him and not their own abilities during that year.

God also demanded that Israel as recipients of God's Grace *practice that Grace toward their brothers and sisters by faith*. Every Israelite was to practice something God called **the LORD'S release**. Literally in the Hebrew this was **YAHWEH's shemittah** {pronounced shem-it-taw'}, and this literally meant that *all debt was forgiven*. In other words, if you loaned money or lands to a *fellow believer*, then *all debt* was forgiven during that Sabbatical Year. When God talked about the LORD'S release I want you to note that He used His MOST HOLY NAME, YAHWEH, to refer to that release. The implication was that the believer - when he or she forgave another believer from debt - then The **Eternal**

**God, He Who always is and Will Always Be**

considered that act of release as not just a Grace Gift to the indebted believer - but it was also a Gift given back to God.

If you are a *recipient* of Grace then God *expects you* to give graciously to others. You as God's people are expected to give to one another - and to *forgive one another* just as Christ has given to you. Listen to God's promise to His children if we are *gracious* and *giving* to one another:

**FOCAL Deuteronomy 15:5-8 (KJV) "... Only if thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day. {6} For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. {7} If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: {8} But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth."**



God promised Israel that **thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee**. When a people *imitates Christ in its graciousness to others* then God promises to bless us, to promote us, to enlarge us.

These principles of giving are not just true for Israel - again, I bring your attention to the fact that God used His Eternal Name YHWH when He referred to this release. This is an *eternal principle of giving* that God expects His people to imitate.

*What about loopholes* in this system? What if God sends a believer to you for blessing, and it's the *sixth year* and you know that *next year* you'll have to forgive the debt. Can you harden your heart against that brother or sister? What does the Lord say?


**FOCAL** Deuteronomy 15:9-11 (KJV) "**Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. {10} 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 putteth thine hand unto. {11} For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.**"

God warned us against *refusing to give based on selfishness* by telling the Israelite "**thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee**". God considered selfishness among those who were recipients of His Grace to be a sin against YHWH Himself! If giving was done graciously

and whole heartedly, then YHWH returned blessing to Israel graciously and wholeheartedly. If giving was given in a niggardly<sup>6</sup>, poor fashion, then God returned blessing to Israel in a poor fashion.

### **Does This Principle of Giving Truly Apply To The Church Today?**

The Apostle tells us:

 2 Corinthians 9:6-9 (KJV) "**But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. {7} Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: {9} (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.**"

God is *very specific* when He talks to us about giving. We were given much more than we *ever deserve* at the Cross of Calvary. Think about all that we've received as believers. First of all, our *sin* has been cast into the sea of forgetfulness because of the Blood of Christ. The Lord tells us:

**Hebrews 10:17-20 (KJV) "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. {18} Now where**

6 this word means 1. Grudging and petty in giving or spending; 2. Meanly small; scanty or meager: left the waiter a niggardly tip.

**remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. {19} Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, {20} By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"**

What else is true for the believer? We are *heirs of the Kingdom of God*, adopted children by faith in Him.

**Romans 8:15-17 (KJV) "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. {16} The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: {17} And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."**

As heirs of God by faith in Christ we are *empowered* to live for Him. We are told frequently in Scripture that we are given power *to serve Him as more than victors* in this life.

**Romans 13:12-14 (KJV) "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. {13} Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. {14} But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."**

Shall I go on? Shall I truly tell each of you how much

God in Christ has blessed you, has blessed me? John MacArthur states in his sermon "A Biblical Model for Giving":

**"[God is] saying I'm not commanding you but I'm telling you prove your love. I'm not speaking this is as a command but it is voluntary...free will, but as proving through the earnestness of others, and there he's referring to the Macedonians. He's comparing them to the Macedonians. As proving through the earnestness of others, through following their example, following their pattern, the sincerity of your love also.**

**I'll tell you one thing about giving, it verifies the level of your love. You can give without loving, that's required giving, but you can't love without giving. And the amount of your giving expresses the amount of your love. It proves, dokimazo is the word, the word for testing something to verify it. Through the earnestness of others, that is the very earnest giving of the Macedonians, by measuring yourself against them you can see the sincerity of your love. I want it to be the same thing. I want it to be the same as theirs. I want you to follow their example and prove that your love, your agape is sincere, literally genuine, the real thing, legitimate, true. As John says, "How can you say you love God if you don't love the brethren? How can you say the love of God dwells in you if you close your compassion to someone in need?" Fervently love one another. "**

**What Example Did Christ**

## Give Us On Giving?

When we read the teachings of Christ on giving, it's not hard to understand that they *perfectly repeat* the things that God told His Old Testament saints. In His *Sermon on the Mount* Jesus told us:



**Matthew 5:42 (KJV) "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."**

Those who receive the Grace of God *should be gracious people*. I want you to note that Jesus did not tell us *what* to give, but just that we give! If someone asks us for something, be it funds, a helping hand, love, or time .... no matter what it is, we must be willing to give. We are not allowed to *turn someone away* unless that person is asking for something which will *not* honor God in Christ. For instance, I make it a point *never* to give money to a stranger. I'll put gas in their car, carry them to the store and buy them food, or give them a lift to a place they need to go. But I've learned *not* to give money, lest I enable a drunkard or a drug abuser to purchase something that will further cripple their life. I believe that this is a Biblical principle, for Jesus told us:

**Matthew 7:6 (KJV) "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."**

The term **dogs** is used throughout Scripture to refer to **unbelievers**. Jesus wanted us to be careful about

enabling the unbeliever with our gifts to do evil things - so I avoid giving money to those I do not know.



**Luke 6:33-36 (KJV) "And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. {34} And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. {35} But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. {36} Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."**

The giving that Christ modeled was *selfless giving*, much as God the Father has often given to us. Jesus warned us that God *sees the sinner giving to sinners*, profiting by his giving - and God expects better of His children. As those who have experienced the abundant Grace of God, we are expected to be gracious in how we ourselves give. Jesus gives us a promise at the end of this section:

**Luke 6:38 (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."**

Does giving apply *merely to our possessions*? No, for Jesus told us that giving also applies to *giving forgiveness* to even those who do not deserve forgiveness. Jesus told us:



**Matthew 6:14-15 (KJV) "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: {15} But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."**

Again we have *very clear instruction* as to how we should live our lives. God graciously forgave us every sin we ever committed against Him -- so we should forgive every sin that others commit against us. This is the Christian way of life, the way that Christ taught us. As He hung on the Cross dying for our sins He cried out to God:

**Luke 23:34 (KJV) "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."**

We need not cluck our tongues and think that we would have not done the same if we were there - we probably would have all been casting lots with the soldiers, seeking money rather than His face. Prior to our salvation we knew nothing of God's Grace. With our very lives we dishonored Him. We chased the god of money, we ignored His cries from the Cross. Yet after salvation, after we came to know Him as our Savior and Lord we began to understand that love is more powerful than hate, Grace more powerful than graft, giving more beneficial than money grubbing. We found Him, our Savior, and placed our hands in His. We found Jesus to be loving, and were willing to love as He told us to love.

If you do not know Christ as Savior, you will not know

this great love of His. Nearly every week I receive hate letters from unbelievers who think they are believers, angry people who spew hatred and bile through the Internet. Many of these people are much like the Pharisees and Scribes who so hated Jesus and His disciples. They knew what the Scripture said, but with dead hearts they could not *put what they knew into Divine usage*. Like many of the confused that visit this site, they can spit the same vinegar that was forced onto the lips of our Savior as He hung on the Cross - but they can never know the love nor the power of God. Their fruit is not of the Spirit, but it is of the flesh (**Galatians 5:16-26**). And one day they shall leave this life, religious but damned for all eternity - for unless Christ, the very God of Love, dwell in you to will and to do of His good pleasure, you will never see Him beyond the veil.

Those who know Him, and have been loved by Him, want to be gracious as He was in all things.

I pray you know Jesus Christ, not as a mere mental exercise, but as your Lord and Savior. May God touch your hearts with these words.