

## How to Be Gracious

### Scripture

“Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent [aid] once and again for my necessities. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things [sent] from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.” (Philippians 4:14-18 NKJV)

### Thesis

Seeing a gift as a reward for the giver ensures humility and Joy.

### Commentary

Some people have difficulty receiving from others. They are unable to receive gifts because their pride triggers feelings of inferiority and embarrassment. Depending upon the extent of the pride the reaction might be very noticeable.

If you struggle in this area, look to what Paul says in the passage above. He did not seek the gift from the Philippians but the fruit that abounds to their account because of their gift. He defined the gift, as he should, as it related to the Philippians. He did not look at it as it related to him, but as it related to them. Their gift was evidence of God’s grace working among them. The end of that, of course, is a blessing to the Philippians. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:25).

Good deeds done by a loving heart are described as a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. The next time someone is offering to help you in some way, don’t just dismiss him without remembering that his help may be a blessing to God. Don’t always put your feelings first.

Now, that is not to say you should receive gifts that are not needed while leaving the giver uninformed. Paul made the Philippians aware that he did not seek a gift from them. Some men shuffle back and forth with their heads down and hands extended during the weekly meeting, and then live sumptuously during the week. This gives the devil great opportunity to sow resentment.

Let people know your situation if they seek to give you a gift, but don’t refuse the gift simply because your pride will not allow you to be gracious. Remember the blessing they will receive for their generosity.

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, many never receive the gift of your Son because of pride. They will not humble themselves and admit their need for a Savior. Lord, we are thankful that you did what was needed to humble us. Now help us to guard our hearts against pride for we know you resist the proud, but give grace to the humble (James 4:6). Continue to teach us humility, and let us practice generosity with all men, amen.