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- 📍 January 12, 2019 - David Sullivan
  - 📍 Abram and the Wisemen
  - 📍 Genesis 14:20; Matthew 2:10-11

We recently celebrated the Christmas season, a time we celebrate God's gift of Jesus Christ to us. Unfortunately, we too often seem to misunderstand giving. Families often set dollar limits on what they will spend on each other, giving gifts that are relatively equal in value trying to avoid those awkward moments when someone gives a gift of greater expense than we gave them. Or heaven forbid we have a party and someone shows up with a gift for us when we have nothing for them. Or maybe we give a gift and get nothing in return and feel slighted! Let's look at a couple of examples of gift giving in Scripture.

In Genesis, Abram was returning from defeating King Kedorlaomer and his allies and rescuing his nephew Lot. He was met by the King of Salem who blessed him and declared, "And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram then gave a tenth of everything he had out of gratitude for the deliverance from his enemies, setting the standard of giving we follow today.

In Matthew 2:10-11 we have the story of the Magi bringing gifts to Jesus. They had been reading the prophecy of the birth of the long-awaited Savior and they bowed down and worshipped Him, giving gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They were overjoyed and gave out of celebration in worship to the One who would provide salvation.

These two seemingly unrelated scriptures, separated by two millennia, teach us much about giving. Giving should come not out of compulsion or guilt, but rather from a grateful heart. Abram gave a tenth to the King of Salem for the victory achieved in battle. The Wisemen gave in worship of the birth of the long-awaited Savior and Hope of the World. Mary and Joseph gave nothing in return, rather, they gratefully received the gifts on Jesus' behalf.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says, "*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion.*" Abram and the Wiseman demonstrated this type of giving, grateful for the provision that the Lord had provided and was going to provide in the future. As you pray and ask the LORD what part He would have you play in this campaign, ask Him to open your eyes to see both what He has done for you and is about to do for you. God loves a cheerful giver.

