



Hand-Out or a Hand-Up?

A few years ago when our kids were small and money was very tight, we didn't have any \$ for Christmas gifts so I lined up 6 different "time share" presentation sales mtgs that my wife & I attended just to receive the free gifts.

We went to 6 different high-pressure 2 hr sales mtgs in one summer just to get the freebies! We were made to feel "*stupid and ignorant*" just because we weren't willing to buy into a "time share" hotel room in Florida or some new camp sight.we said NO and they kept saying YES...until we crawled out 2 hrs later with our free gifts.

My wife asked me at the end of the summer to never take her to another time share presentation! ...and we never have.

We only wanted the free gifts...we weren't interested in the hotel room.

Will anyone else admit they have done the same thing?

Often on college campuses where students are out of money and always hungry, if a company is starting up and wants to recruit new employees,

it will entice young people to come to an interview by offering free pizza.

Some students don't want the job; they just want the free pizza.

The food in the present seems to be more important when your belly is growling than the actual job for the future.

Bible tells usJesus fed a crowd of 5,000 and the next day, many searched for him just for more of the free food.

They wanted "natural bread" when the "bread of life" was standing there talking to them.

John 6:24-26,35,41

Joh 6:24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

Joh 6:25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Joh 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Joh 6:41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

They got upset, murmured and complained with him because he wanted to preach to them instead of giving

them *more free food.*

Often carnal people do this when the preacher is right but they don't like it.

I was driving down the road the other day when today's message hit me and I called home and left the thought and title on my answering machine so I wouldn't forget it.

"Hand-Out or a Hand-Up?"

This is the time of the year that most everyone is aware of other's needs and they try to bless them with either a gift or a necessity such as money, food, clothing.

It's important for us to be a blessing to other people especially those that are in need and not one time a year but year round.

Bible tells us the early NT church "had all things in common" which meant they shared and cared with each other. If you had two coats or an extra pair of shoes and someone needed one, you gave them one of yours.

They shared their homes, lands, their possessions so everyone could be blest! They cared and they shared! (say it with me!)

Its human nature to need something! And the people that lived during the days of Jesus on earth were pretty much the same as they are today with personal needs.

Jesus even said in Matt.26:11 "for ye have the poor always with you..."

We all need air; water, food, shelter, clothes, friends and Jesus found himself often being followed by hungry crowds of people just because he could perform miracles and feed thousands with just a handful of fishes & bread.

Text: The crowd went looking for him and finally found him but he saw in their hearts that all they wanted was another hand-out. They weren't really interested in heaven, receiving any teaching or becoming a dedicated disciple.

They just wanted the fishes and loaves of bread and not any spiritual food.

They just wanted another hand-out and not a hand-up out of their poor spiritual conditions.

He said in John 6:26,35

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Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Jesus has a way of looking into our hearts and knowing whether we are interested in him as our savior or just what he can give us.

I have to admit, your pastor has to deal with this very issue all year long but especially during this time of the year. I get numerous phone calls from people, church and non-church people needing help with food, electric bills, rent payments, gasoline...you name it. Sometimes it's a 1/2 dozen phone calls a week.

Our church is not rich. In fact we are just holding our own especially the last couple of years. That's why it's so very important to be faithful in your tithes and offering just to keep us going, let alone helping others out.

A few weeks ago, I had one lady call me 5-7 times a day, leaving messages on my answering machine at my house and our church daycare. I called her and told her we couldn't help, so she waited until the next weekend and called again.

I invited her to church so we could talk about it but she didn't want to do that, she wanted me to come to their house with the check book.

One day she forgot she had just called me and she was just going down thru the phone book calling churches and she had a memorized presentation.

She started in and half way thru it, I stopped her....told her I just talked to her 5 minutes ago and she hung up on me. An hour later, she called back again with the same memorized story word for word until she heard my voice and hung up again on me.

She didn't want God or the church; she just wanted a hand-out!

Folks! I've been there! I know what's its like to stand in line for gov't cheese, to be on food stamps and to eat macaroni and cheese everyday because that's all we could afford. I understand what it means to be needy!

I wish our church had an endless amount of resources to bless others but we don'tso some people get offended.

In John 6: Jesus told the crowd... *"you aren't interested in the miracles or the spiritual things I have to offer you...you're just following me for the food. " and he turned them away.*

He got a little plain with them and it offended some of them and the Bible says "many" disciples or so-called followers deserted Jesus

John 6:66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He then turns around and asked his 12 main disciples if they were going to leave him also and Peter replied vs. 68,69

Joh 6:68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Joh 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Peter said:

Where else can we go but to you Lord.

This world has nothing to offer us.

The 12 were interested in him.....not just what he could give them.

They wanted a hand up out of sin; they wanted a hand up out of this wicked world and not just another hand-out.

They wanted to someday being lifted up at the sound of the trumpet calling the church home to glory and not just to have their bellies full of earthly food.

One author wrote this:

"Examining our motives

For following the Lord

Will show if we're authentically

Believing in his Word"

Only Jesus Christ, the living Bread can satisfy our spiritual hunger.

Questions: What are you interested in this morning?

Why are you at church today?

Do you want just another blessing or do you want more of Jesus?

Do you just want to feel good or do you desire to know him better?

Oh yes, don't get me wrong today...Jesus often turned the water into wine (or fresh juice) and multiplied 2 fishes and 5 loaves of bread and feed 5,000 people. God often allowed barrels of oil to miraculously keep filling themselves up until all the needs were satisfied.

Jesus cares about our daily bread. He cares our basic needs and wants but he also looks down deep into our hearts and motives and can see if we are just following him and coming to church for the stuff or are you interested in more of him.

Do you just want fresh baked bread from the store that will go stale after a few days or do you want the bread of life that will last for a lifetime?

Do you want a drink of natural water that flows from the ground or do you want a drink of living waters that flows down from Heaven?

**Jesus met the woman at the well in Samaria and she wanted a hand-out,
she wanted water out of the well but he offered her more.**

**He told her he could give her water where she could never thirst again. ...
a well of water springing up into everlasting life".**

He gave her a hand-up out of sin!

**Oh yes, Jesus will bless us, Jesus will help us....thank God he answers our
prayers and comes thru so many times when we have emergencies and basic
needsbut his main mission is listed in Lk.19:10 For the Son of
man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**

He didn't robe himself in flesh and come to a humble cattle stall in Bethlehem just to give me free food but he came to save my soul.

He came not to give us a hand-out but a hand-up out of sin and this world.

Old Chinese saying: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

We've got to do more than hand them a turkey on Thanksgiving day but we need totell them about the Lord of lord and King of kings.

We need to do more than hand them a pair of shoes or a pair of gloves but we need tointroduce them to the Savior of the world that wants to lift them up out of sin.

Jesus realized it and the church today has to realize it....

we can try to met the needs of others around us and try to feed the world and we will do our very best with the resources we have but

our main purpose is to teach them how to get out of sin;

how to live victoriously over their addictions and tell them how to be

born again so they can go to Heaven.

I can miss Heavenon a full stomach.

I can be lostwith a warm house and nice clothes on my back.

But I also know I can be saved and go to Heaven hungry and poor just as long as I'm rich in Jesus.

Its not about a hand-out, it's about a hand-up!

If you see someone in need and they need help with their daily necessities, help them as much as you can but before you are done, tell them about Jesus and his wonderful plan of salvation.

Jesus came to "seek and to save the lost"....not to start a food pantry.

Jesus came to "seek and save the lost"....not to become a welfare program or another good will store.

I don't want you to get me wrong!

Jesus told us that we should help others.

In fact, If God has blest you, you need to bless others.

Matt. 25:33-40

Mat 25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Mat 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Mat 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Mat 25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

Mat 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

Mat 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

The Bible tells us to help those in need, to visit the fatherless, orphans and help the widows but don't just give them a hand-out, let's go the 2nd mile and give them a hand-up out of sin!

Good example of this is found in Acts 3:1-16

Act 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

Act 3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

Act 3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

Act 3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

Act 3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

Act 3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Act 3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: (repeat it) and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

Act 3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

Act 3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

Act 3:10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Act 3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

Act 3:12 And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? (its not us)

Act 3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

Act 3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

Act 3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Act 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Peter and John didn't have any hand-outs that day.....no money, no food or any alms to help this poor man but they did give him a hand-up out of sin.

They helped to introduce this lame man to Jesus and take him to church.

Vs.7 Act 3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

I dare to say "we need to be lifting others up more than just providing another hand outdoes anyone agree with me?

Help them anyway possible but before it's all said and done.....tell them about Jesus!

Stand/musicians come:

Acts 2:38-42

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Act 2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,*even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Act 2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

Act 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (they got saved and stayed saved)

This gift, this promise is for everyone!

No one is excluded!

This Christmas season, we are all going to open up gifts and bless others with gifts but lets go the 2nd mile and look for a way to introduce them to the reason why we celebrate Christmas anyhow.

It's all about Jesus!

It's all about him coming to save the world from their sins.

Santa is fun and Rudolph is nice but it's about Jesus....

Its more than hand-outs, it's about giving someone a hand-up out of sin.

I wonder this morning if you would like a hand-up out of sin?

We have water to baptize you; you can receive the gift of the HG before you leave here today. It's the best gift you'll ever receive.... guaranteed!

This altar is open if you'd like to come and pray to the same Jesus you've heard about today. He wants to do more than just bless you in the

here and now but he wants you to get ready for the here after.