

Seize the Opportunity . . . To Honor God with Your Money – Prov 3:9-10

It's been some time since I last preached about money and giving

So long that someone asked me at PwtP's recently – Do you ever preach about giving?

Caught me off guard – I've never been asked that question; Caught me off guard
Why do you ask?

“Because we've never heard you say anything about money, but giving is amazing”

“Better yet, I don't even feel guilty about buying a shirt every now and then like I
used to at my old church”

It *has* been a long time, and our giving *is* very good – I'm thankful for that; Commend you

But money is such a stronghold in some of your lives . . .

And the love of money such a temptation for *all* of us . . .

That it's good to be reminded from time to time, that we need to honor God w/ it

But make no mistake – this message is not as much about your \$\$ as it is about your heart

How you handle your money is one of the best heart monitors around

Honoring God with your money is a heart issue

Jesus made that very clear when he hammered the Pharisees for tithing so meticulously
when their hearts were far from God

Turn to **Prov 3:9-10**

As we approach the end of the year; As the build-out continues in full swing

As next year's budget is being set, and future ministry is being planned . . .

Crucial time in the life of our church to establish God-honoring patterns in your giving

In fact, the patterns of giving that we establish now will determine in large part, the extent
of our ministry for the next couple of years

So it's vitally important that you seize this opp (this time in the life of our church; this
time in your life) to honor God with your money

Though this passage tells us *what* to do, it doesn't tell us *how*

To find that out, we're going to look at several other Scriptures, starting with

1 Chron 29:10-14

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Acknowledge where your money comes from (1 Chron 29:10-14)

God *owns* everything and *gives* you everything you have

1 Chron 29:11 – *All that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours*

Ps 24:1 – *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who
dwell therein*

God owns your bank balance, house, car, TV, computer, **cell phone** – everything

When you get that one right, you're well on your way to honoring God with your \$\$

Miss that one, and you'll forever struggle with the rest of this

Not only does he *own* everything you have, he *gives* you everything you have

Get a **\$20 bill** from someone

I found it – Does that honor you? Make you feel real good?

I made it – Does that hone you?

The thing that honors you most is acknowledging that it came from *you*

1 Chron 29:12-14 – *Both riches and honor come from you . . . In your hand it is to
make great and to give strength to all . . . All things come from you*

Could it be any clearer?

God gave you *everything* you have – even non-material blessings like honor, greatness,
and strength

Honoring God with your money starts by acknowledging that it was his to begin with, that
it all comes from him, and that he still owns it

Which is why you should . . .

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Use your money for God's purposes (Luke 19:11-27)

Jesus tells a parable in Luke 19:11-27 to make this point

It's the parable of the nobleman who, just before he left on a long journey, gave his
servants each a sum of money and told them to engage in business until he comes

Those who used his money to make *more*, were commended and rewarded

Those who didn't, were reprimanded and received no blessing

Jesus has given each of us the opp to use our time, talent, and treasure for his purposes,
while we wait for his return

When he does, we will answer to him for what we did

We will give account for how we honored God with our money, or not

The point is – use your money for God's purposes while you still have life and breath

Remember, the issue is not how *much* you have, but how you *use* it

One of the servants in the parable put the money under a mattress and the nobleman not
only severely reprimanded him, but took it away and gave it to the servant who had
used it wisely, for the nobleman's purposes

I don't know exactly how that's going to play out when Jesus returns

But the teaching is clear – seize the opp, now and for the rest of your life, to use your
money for *God's* purposes

Back to Prov 3 – read v9

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Give first (Prov 3:9)

If you want to honor God with your money, give to the Lord's work, *first*; Off the top

When you realize a gain – give *first*; When you get paid . . . When you get money . . .

This principle was lived out over and over again by God's people down through the cent's
In Moses' day . . .

Ex 23:19 (God speaking) – *The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring
into the house of the LORD your God.*

In Hezekiah's day – when the temple sacrifices were re-started . . .

2 Chron 31:5 – *As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel
gave in abundance the firstfruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce
of the field. And they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.*

In Nehemiah's day – after the Israelites returned from captivity, re-built the temple, and
re-established worship, they said . . .

Ne 10:35,39 – *We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the
firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD . . . We
will not neglect the house of our God.*

Giving *first* has been one of the ways to honor God since the beginning of time – still is

Seize this opp to establish a new pattern in your giving, and give to the Lord’s work *first*
Not out of your leftovers, but off the top
Commit to that and make it a priority – God honors that

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Tithe consistently (Mal 3:10)

Mal 3:10 – *Bring the full tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house.*

Tithe means tenth – that portion of your income/gain that God wants you to give
Storehouse in those days was literally a room connected to the side of the temple, used to store the tithes of grain, oil, and money that people brought

In our day, the closest thing to the temple is the local church
It was the primary place of worship and teaching then, just as the local church is God’s primary place of worship and teaching now
So when he says bring the *full* tithe into the *storehouse*, the principle for today is to give a tenth of your income to your church
If you call Harvest your church home, this is where you should tithe
This is where you should bring your *full* tithe

Giving your tithe to several different ministries or churches is not bringing your *full* tithe into the storehouse – that’s a partial tithe

Giving a tithe every now and then is a partial tithe

Giving only when you “can” or when you feel like it is a partial tithe

God calls that *robbery* in Mal 3:8-9

A *full* tithe is a consistent tithe, otherwise it’s not full by definition

The whole principle of storehouse tithing is bringing *all* of your tithe to your primary place of worship, your local church

This is where the strongholds start to rear their ugly head

I don’t *want* to give to the Lord’s work in our church

I don’t *want* to give up 10% of *my* income

I don’t *want* to give up control of *my* money

I don’t *want* to live on 90%

Hitting any nerves yet?

Do you fight against God’s design to honor him with your *consistent* tithes?

If so, you’re missing out on his best, and so is our church

With a new year approaching and a building in sight, consistent tithing is crucial in order to minister to and effectively disciple the increased numbers of people who will come
Though we’ve based our 2007 budget on conservative growth estimates, it’s still going to exceed \$1.5m – 38% increase over this year

Seize this opp – or let it seize you – to tithe consistently

If you have questions – get them answered

If you’re skeptical or have concerns – get them addressed

Don’t use them as an excuse to withhold your tithe from God

If you can’t live on 90% of your income with your current standard of living, then change it – your standard of living is too high

Don’t rob God, change your life

Seize the opp and make the commitment to tithe consistently . . .

And then stick w/ it no matter what

That honors God

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Offer what you can (1 Chron 29:1-9)

God does what you *can’t* when you offer what you *can*

There are times in life when God will present an ext opp, and ask you to offer what you can in order to seize it – our building is one such opp

There will *always* be opp’s around here to offer what you can – needs, crises, ministry

You’re not going to get rich coming to Harvest – if you do, you’re going to be

miserable because you’re probably not offering what you can to spread the word

The opp in front of us right now, to get into a place of our own, is going to require that every single one of us offer what we can over and above our tithe to make it happen

If you were coming previous to 6 months ago, you might be thinking . . .

Didn’t we already do that? Didn’t we already give sacrificially?

Yes, to a great extent, and we’re almost home; But we need to finish strong

Last April, we set a goal as a church to raise \$1.3m in one shot

An unheard of amount for a church only 18months old with 650 people

But on April 9th – \$1.6m was committed and given 3 weeks later

At that time, we didn’t know how much the build-out would cost, we just knew that this was an ext opp that we couldn’t pass up, and we needed to get our foot in the door

As the months went by and the build-out plans were finalized, it became apparent that it was going to be more than what we first hoped and more than what we anticipated, and we were going to be short

After talking with American Bank and Trust who wrote our loan in the first place, and who have helped us immensely . . .

We need to raise another \$300k to finish the build-out and move in – that’s bottom line

We’re 300k short on a \$7.7m project

Here are the basic numbers . . .

Finances of Purchase and Build-out

Cost of building = \$4.7m

Cost of build-out = \$3.0m Includes sound system, tables, chairs, everything

Total Cost \$7.7m

Mortgage \$5.8m

Building Fund \$1.6m Original amount given

Total Covered \$7.4m

Funds still needed \$300k

That 300k is going to require that we give what we can, over and above our tithe

That’s what the ancient Israelites did in 1 Chron 29 when they were getting ready to build the temple

King David took the lead and gave from his personal treasury, then the leaders, and then the people

We followed that example and experienced the same rejoicing they did

1 Chron 29:9 – *The people rejoiced greatly because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD.*

But we're not finished

Some of you have already offered all you can

You've given generously and even *sacrificially* – cutting into money that you need

One of our daughters out of the blue at the dinner table this week said –

“Dad, I already gave \$40 to the building fund, do I have to give anymore?”

“Honey, I don't care what you give; That's between you and the Lord”

“I think I'll give another \$10, but I don't want to give \$40 again”

If you've already given and God prompts you to give more, do so

If he doesn't, feel no pressure

Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion

(2 Cor 9:7)

Others of you may have given *something*, but could give more

Maybe you didn't because you hadn't been coming to Harvest for very long

Or were less mature in your faith at that time

Or were skeptical as to whether this was really going to happen

Or your original amount was the threshold of what you could give joyfully at the time

Talking to someone recently who shared that exact story

They gave an amount 5k less than what they had originally had in their mind, because they couldn't give it joyfully – that's okay

But God has brought them to a point of *wanting* to give that additional 5k

If that's you, will you consider whether God would have you give again?

There's a third group of about 300 of you who weren't even here 6 months ago – maybe you haven't given at all

If you call Harvest your church home, would you seize the opp with us and offer what *you* can?

It's going to take the full participation of *everyone* in order to finish strong and make this happen

No matter who you are, we want you to be informed; So as you exit this morning –

Updated version of the **Seize the Opp booklets**

There will be 2 **Information Meetings** right here in the auditorium next Sunday the 12th, and the following Sunday the 19th

That's where we'll give you the background on all this, cover the details of the finances and budget, and answer any questions you might have

Even if you were here last March, I'd encourage you to come; Start at 1 p.m.

Building Tours on the 12th and 19th as well

Pictures are one thing, but we want you to see the progress first hand

Starting at 1 p.m., we'll take groups of 25 through every 15 minutes

Because each time slot is limited to 25, we have sign up sheets available in the lobby

Due to liability issues we can only allow adults

300k needed by **Jan 28th**, but we need to know how much to expect by **Dec 17th** –

Commitment Sunday – cards in back of the booklets

We want to inform you, update you, and encourage you because . . .

We're almost home; So please pray to that end and offer what you can

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO . . .

Receive God's blessing (Prov 3:10)

Read Prov 3:9-10

If you honor God with your wealth and giving, you stand to receive God's blessing

May or may not be materially – this is poetic language to describe a blessing

But he *will* bless you – obedience *always* brings blessing

The key is seizing the opp to receive it

Some of you are scared to death to do that

You're scared to death to give your heart to this

“I can't give to God *first*; How will I pay my bills? I can't tithe *consistently*”

Others of you outright reject this because you don't want to let go of any more money than you have to

In either case, you're missing out on God's richest blessing in your life

Prov 11:24 – *One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want*

Choose to sin, choose to suffer; Don't go there

Some of you have plenty of money and yet live a miserable life

One of the reasons is that you're not honoring God with your wealth

It's a heart issue

Mal 3:10 – *Bring the full tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house.*

And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

Seize the opp to . . .

Repent of your past giving habits; Renew your commitment; Give what you should

Honor God with all your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce

Then receive God's blessing