

Biblical Principles of Money (Part 7) – Giving

2 Cor 9:6; This is the 7th and final message in our series on money; And so far we've covered 15 principles for a life built to last
But we haven't talked about giving; In fact, it's been 2½ *years* since we last talked about it; So that's where we're going to end this weekend
And I trust that you'll be encouraged and spurred on; Not defeated, but invigorated
Knowing the grace/goodness of God in this, and excelling more and more (2 Cor 8:7)

So here's the first principle . . .

Principle #16 – Generosity is a blessing that God blesses (2 Cor 9:6,11)

Generosity, as in the act of freely giving money, help, or time; Anything that extends favor toward someone

It's a blessing to them, and God blesses it in you; Both/And; 2 Cor 9:6

[6] *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully [generously] will also reap bountifully.*

He's talking about a special offering he was collecting for the church in Jerusalem, and uses a farming analogy to say that if you *invest* little in the work of ministry . . .
Little relative to what you *have* – you'll get little out of it

But if you invest *much*, if you're *generous* in your giving – you'll be *blessed* much
Blessed by knowing it's making a kingdom impact, blessed by knowing it's helping others, and blessed by being given all the more – you'll *reap bountifully*
Generosity is a blessing to *others*, and it's a blessing that God blesses in you

And he says it again in v11a – *You will be enriched in every way for all your generosity*
It couldn't be any clearer; If you bless others, God will bless you
How often do we miss out on that, b/c we're stingy?
Or try to give as little as possible, instead of as much as possible? Too often I fear
Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Cor 9:6)

➤ And the converse is also true; *Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly*
Something Solomon made clear 1000 years earlier; Look at **Prov 11:24-25**
[24] *One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want* [he reaps sparingly]. On the other hand . . .
[25] *Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered* [one who gives what he has for the good of others, will himself be blessed].
In which case generosity leads to blessing for *everyone* involved

And then there's Jesus in **Lk 6:38**, who said – *Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.*
Like when people of that day bought grain from a generous merchant; He would shake it down, pack it in, and make sure it was running over
And Jesus used it as an object lesson, to say – *give* like that, and you'll be blessed like that; *For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.*

➤ Let me ask you something; If your *salary* was determined by that verse, how much would you make?
If your wages were set based on how generous you are, could you make ends meet?
If not, you're cutting yourself short, and missing out

If you're generous in your *giving*, God will be generous with you
And the *extent* of your blessing depends on the extent of your *sacrifice*
Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Cor 9:6)
It may not come in the form of *money* every time, but it *will come*
Generosity is a blessing that God blesses*****

➤ And one of the best ways to break your bondage in this, is to do it
When needs arise, step out in faith and be generous; When God prompts, give over and above; And I'm not just talking about *here* . . .
I'm thinking of *every* area of life; Every opportunity you come across

Not that you should throw wisdom to the wind and enable someone standing at the curb;
Like the family out by the gas station; We've talked to them
Nor is every opportunity a mandate
But when God prompts, respond; And practice generosity
B/c it's a blessing that God blesses, and a rock-solid principle for a life built to last

2nd, and #17 for a life built to last, is that . . .

Principle #17 – God expects me to tithe to my church (Mal 3:8-10)

Saying in Mal 3:10 – *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse*; And I'd like you to see it for yourself; Mal 3:8-10
It's a passage that's well loved by many of you, but disdained by others; And I don't want that to be; I want you to *love* this passage b/c you *obey* this passage
And experience the faithfulness of God that it promises

So follow along with me starting in v8

[8] *Will man rob God?* [It's a rhetorical question to say that it's unthinkable] *Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?'* [And God responds] *In your tithes and contributions. [9] You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. [10] Bring the full tithe 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.*

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse is a command; And therefore God's expectation
And a *tithe* refers to a tenth – 10%; It's not only what the word means, but that's how it's used in Scripture
Like in **Lev 27:32** – *Every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord.*
Indicating that *tithe* and *tenth* are used interchangeably
So God expects me to give 10% of my income, on a regular basis*****

If I earn \$10, I should give \$1; If I get a paycheck or a bonus, I should give a tenth
If I cash in a stock or bond, I should give 10% of my *gain*
If I sell a piece of land or get out of a business, I should tithe my *profit* – the difference between what I bought it for and what I sold it for
If I receive a gift, I should give a tenth to the Lord; B/c that's what he expects

➤ And, I should give it to my church
That's the idea of the *storehouse* here in v10 – *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse*

Which in Malachi's day was a literal room connected to the side of the *temple*, that was used to store the tithes of grain, oil, and money

Grain, oil, and money that was used for the work of *ministry* and those who did it; Like the Levites and singers and priests (Neh 13:5)

So God is essentially saying, bring a tenth of your income to the place he has built and designed for discipleship, worship, and ministry

The place he has designated, for people to be fed and led spiritually

Which in our day, is the local church

Just like the temple was God's primary source of discipleship and ministry *then*, the church is God's primary source of discipleship and ministry *now*

It's an analogy you can't avoid; Especially since the church, the *people* of God, are referred to as God's temple in the New Testament (1 Cor 3:16)

It's called storehouse tithing, and it's what God expects

God expects us to tithe to our church

➤ And as if that's not reason enough, he gives us 3 more; First . . .

- **It's how he provides**

[10] *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.*

Tithing, is how God puts food on the table

Which in Malachi's day, meant both *physical* food to sustain the priests and temple workers, and *spiritual* food to sustain the people

And the same is true in our day, right here in *our* church; *Our* tithes, are God's means of providing for the work of ministry, and those who lead it

It's how he ensures that the gospel goes forward, and his whole counsel is taught, and people are discipled, and worship is offered

2nd . . .

- **It's what he blesses**

[10] *Bring the full tithe 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.*

"Go ahead" God says; "Make my day; And I'll make yours"

Tithing is one of the ways God blesses us; Which takes us right back to the previous principle – that generosity is a blessing that God blesses

Sometimes monetarily, and sometimes not; Sometimes right away, and sometimes later; Sometimes in what you experience, and sometimes in what you avoid

It's not *why* we give; It's not *why* we tithe; But God sure does bless it

And 3rd . . .

- **It ensures my love**

Tithing to my church, ensures my *love* for the church; *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* That's what Jesus said

Mt 6:19-21 – "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal [i.e. don't invest in temporal things, things that are here today and gone tomorrow], [20] *but lay up for yourselves treasures in*

heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal [IOW invest in things of eternal value, things that last]. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Where you invest, and in *what*, determines to a large degree, what you *love*; What you're devoted to; What you're passionate about

And when it comes to the things of God, the things above, there's nothing more important to love; And no better investment to make

Starting with the church – a piece of heaven here on earth; And the apple of God's eye; And the bride and fullness of his Son (Eph 1:22-23)

Something that will never ever cease to exist, or fall in value

For all eternity, the church, the people of God – will *worship* God, and be *cherished* by God, without a hitch*****

Can you think of a *better* investment? Can you think of something *better* to love?

I can't; B/c it doesn't exist

➤ And the fact is, if you *give* sparingly to the church, your *love* for the church will be sparing; If you *give* *inconsistently*, your *love* will be inconsistent

If you *give* *randomly*, your *love* will be random

But if you tithe, fully so, and faithfully – your love will be *full*

No tithe, no love; No generosity, no devotion

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Summary)

➤ Now, that usually raises the question – "Should I tithe off my gross, or my net?"

And the answer is not nearly as complicated as we make it; It's gross

That's not only the implication of giving a *full* tithe, but it's the explicit teaching of *other* Scriptures; Like **Prov 3:9-10**

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; [10] then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

IOW tithe *first*; Off the top; That's the idea of honoring the Lord with your *firstfruits*

Before you pay taxes, or contribute to your 401k, or do anything else with your paycheck – give to the Lord

Otherwise, you're saying that the government is more important than God

Or that your retirement account is more important than his work

Tithe off your gross; Tithe first

It's a principle God laid out in Moses' day (Ex 23:19)

It's a principle he re-iterated in Hezekiah's day (2 Chron 31:5)

And it's a principle God's people re-committed to in Nehemiah's day (**Neh 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.

The Scriptural precedent and teaching, is to tithe first (**Summary**)

Which leads us to the *last* principle in our running list . . .

Principle #18 – God gives so that I can too (2 Cor 9:7-10)

Flip back to 2 Cor 9:7-10

[7] *Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

Remember, he's talking about a *special* offering; Something over and *above* the tithe
So you can't use the first part of this verse as a pass

And the point, is that God loves a cheerful giver; An eager giver; A willing giver
IOW *grudging* obedience or *grudging* generosity doesn't cut it
And you know you're grudging in your giving, if you're always looking for more ways to *keep* what you have
Meanwhile, joyful givers, cheerful givers – are always looking for more ways to *give* what they have

So whether it's tithing, or giving sacrificially, or anything in between – make sure your *heart* is in it; Make sure your attitude is right
Otherwise you could give every dime you have, and *still* miss the blessing

➤ *God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make all grace abound to you . . .*
He's able to open the windows of heaven for you and pour down a blessing until there is no more need (Mal 3:10) . . .
So that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. [9] As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

V9 is a quote from Ps 112 referring to the man who fears the Lord, and therefore gives freely of his money and leaves a lasting legacy of righteousness
It's a quote from Scripture; And it's meant to support what Paul just said in v8
That when you give cheerfully and eagerly, God will supply it; His grace will abound to you; He'll give what you *need*, so that you can give what is needed
And thereby abound in *every* good work
IOW God gives to us, so that we can give to others

➤ And what's more, he *multiplies* what we have, in order to give more
V10 – *He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food [it's a metaphor] will supply and multiply your seed for sowing [for giving] and increase the harvest of your righteousness [the effect of your generosity]*

So let's get this straight – God supplies what we have in the first place . . .
And then, when we generously give it, he not only increases the kingdom impact, but multiplies our ability to give even more
All for simply giving what he gave us in the first place

It's crazy; But that's God's economy in his kingdom; That's his way for those he loves, and those who love him; *God* gives, so that we can too
And as you do, he gives even *more*, so that you can *give* more
So that at the end of the day, the more you give, the more you *get* to give (**Summary**)
It's crazy, but true; And the final principle on money, for a life that's built to last

Prayer – Lord, we're so thankful for your love and favor on our lives; And so thankful for how you've provided for our church; Impress these truths on our hearts; Reveal any attitudes that keep us in bondage and diminish your blessing; And use us to do more and give more, even now, for the fame of your name, the glory of your church, and the joy of your people