

Daring to Be Givers

Series: Daring Faith
Brad Bailey – November 18, 2018

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“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’
“In tithes and offerings....¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the
storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,”
says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the
floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will
not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from
devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop
their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. Mal. 3:8-10-11*

Why Does God Dare Us to Give?

1. Giving represents _____... the essence of
relationship God wants with _____.

“Your giving proves the reality of your faith...” 2 Cor 9:13 (Ph)

2. Giving helps restore our role as _____
with God.

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work
it and take care of it. - Genesis 2:15*

*The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the
Lord.- Psalm 24:1*

3. Giving confronts the _____ that money claims
over us.

*“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the
other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot
serve both God and Money.” - Matthew 6:24*

*“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant
nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their
hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.
Command them... to be generous and willing to share. In this way... they
will take hold of the life that is True Life.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19*

4. Giving faithfully reveals our CHARACTER.

*“If you are untrustworthy with worldly wealth, who will trust you with the
true riches of heaven?” - Luke 16:11 (NLT)*

5. Giving generously _____ our world...and
the scope of our influence.

*“The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy
will get smaller and smaller.” - Proverb 11:24 (Mes)*

6. Giving in faith creates the opportunity to experience God’s
_____.

How Can We Become Daring Givers?

1. Give _____ to our role as a partner with God.

*“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then
your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with
new wine.” - Proverbs 3:9-10*

2. Establish a foundation of giving _____
to what we have received.

*“On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of
money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering.” -
1 Cor. 16:2 [NLT]*

3. Develop a _____ of giving that
reflects your faith.

4. Give to FAITHFUL hands.

*“We don't want anyone to find fault with the way we are administering
this generous gift. We intend to do what is right, not only in the sight of
the Lord, but also in the sight of people.” - 2 Corinthians 8:20-21 (GW)*

*“Giving that reflects faith is that which gives up our personal
control ...but not our conscience regarding integrity.”*

5. Give from the heart...compelled by the law of _____.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 10-12

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Intro

Today...we are **concluding our Fall focus on Daring Faith.**

Faith has a daring nature to it.

If we understand that faith is the **intersection where finite beings** respond to an infinite God... it means faith is choosing to trust **what we by nature do not fully understand...or control.** Some of us may find that **exciting...** but **many of us** will find that **challenging.** Human nature likes to have a full **understanding**...and full **control.** We want to think we can understand...and control.

We really want to be like God...but we are not.

So faith is not a break from reality...it is facing reality...the reality that we are not infinite.

Faith calls us to live as the finite in relationship to the infinite.

That sense of dare **becomes most clear** in **God's call to be givers.**

In the days before the time of Christ, in which **God raised up prophets to speak to the people...** God **spoke through the prophet Malachi** saying:

Malachi 3:8-10-11 (NIV)

"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings....¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty.

You can hear the divine dare in daring faith. It is the **only time** God says **"Test me."**

To appreciate this challenge...we need to understand that God was restoring a partnership to be managers of God's provisions.

So God addresses us as **mere mortals...** the finite...those who are not the ultimate source of anything. He speaks of the irony of such mere mortal finite beings robbing Him...He who is the source of everything. It is not a matter of robbing God of resources...but of treating what he has given as if it is our own.

He is confronting the people for failing to be partners in their communal needs. They were called to be a nation of people united under God...with a responsibility to honor God and care for one another.

That included **giving the first tenth** of what they had gained **to the storehouse** where it would **provide for the place and provisions of worship** ...along with **offerings that would serve those in need. It was part of establishing His reign over in a new people. He was declaring “I am your king...and you give to my new kingdom community.”**

God had formed them to understand that their communal needs were not simply a matter of praying that God would provide...but understanding that they were partners. **He was providing to them and they were to set aside provisions to meet those needs.**

We tend to think there are **two ways** to think about the material resources we receive in life:

One is: We are the source of our life resources...so what we get...we own.

Some recognize that life's resources didn't originate from us...so we may see God is the giver...he is the provider... and we are merely passive recipients.

But God says we are managing partners in that provision. He provides to us and THROUGH us.

So God is confronting them...that they are not being faithful partners. A “faithful” partner is literally **“faith filled”**...and they were not operating with faith.

What we find is that our relationship to money...and giving...usually reveals faith more than any other. So God confronts them... they may have thought that everything was fine... carrying on some form of religion...but God reveals what only our relationship to money reveals.

So lets quickly unpack...

Why Does God Dare us to Give? And then ...

How Can We Become Daring Givers

Why Does God Dare Us to Give?

1. Giving represents TRUST... the essence of relationship God wants with YOU.

Can you hear the heart of what God is after?

It's not money...it's trust.

God is after the heart of his people... my heart...your heart.

It reminds me of a parent getting the family some food...and they give it to the child...perhaps in the front seat...to pass out...and the child begins clutching what was given. Dad reaches for a bite and they clutch it. They begin to fear sharing it. They begin to trust in what was given more than the giver. We naturally think how ridiculous they are. But I wonder if it's much different from what we may do every day.

The parent had provided...but now that provision is not being fulfilled. SO they do have a provision issue...but the parent is more deeply faced with the loss of trust and relationship.

Giving represents trust. [1]

“Your giving proves the reality of your faith...” 2 Cor 9:13 (Ph)

2. Giving helps restore our role as PARTNERS with God.

I referred to this before...that God created us to be partners.

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Here God is revealing our true position in relationship to all of life's resources. He is saying: “I have created a world full of goodness...and provision. I have created you with capacity to help manage these resources. God provides the life-providing plants...and the soil, water, and sun...and we manage the process. Provided by God. Managed by Man.

It might be **most accurate** to identify ourselves as **subordinate partners**. God is the executive... he has ultimate authority...but we have been entrusted as managing partners.

Our entire relationship to money and life's possessions is one of being managers of what is not fundamentally ours...but has been extended to us to care for.

Psalm 24:1

The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants, belong to the Lord.

This is the fundamental truth that defines every other aspect of managing money.

This is really important... because **more than we know**...human nature has become one which is **still fighting for control with God**.

We think God wants our stuff...and even the subtlest sense of that... elicits some sense of obligation... resentment... negotiation.

God sees that what's been lost...is our whole role in relationship to life's resources.

Jesus describes how we are managers... given a responsibility...and in every story... the owner is coming back.

My giving reflects that my time, treasure, and talent ultimately comes from God who has entrusted me as a manager who will give account. [2]

So God is saying... you are **guilty of embezzlement**.

I'm calling you to be restored as a partner.

We like to talk about God providing...but he has provided...through us...and that is what giving is about.

Now someone may wonder... if **God owns everything**...controls everything...why doesn't he just **create the means out of thin air... print his own money.** Because **God is not just fulfilling His purposes...but forming people to be partners in those purposes.** We were created as partners.

God dares us to give to restore our role as partners.

3. Giving confronts the POWER that money claims over us.

God sees how the power of money is taking control of people's lives.

Part of thinking we are in control of life...is to think we are in control through money...but not by money. But God sees that there is a spiritual force that money can represent. And when it does...it is the most powerful claim on us.

No culture has ever been **as dominantly materialistic.**

There are **more forces** telling you that you **can find happiness... value...** in something material. Our culture tells us that our net worth and our self-worth are connected. They are NOT. This week we will celebrate Thanksgiving... one of the best attempt in human history to stop and be thankful for what we have. But before our food even digests...we will be called to take up Black Friday...the day we are told we should run out to get so many things we didn't even know existed but now need to be happy.

The money isn't evil...but there is a spiritual dynamic to the power of attachments to what money represents. Money has been given the power to claim it can provide value...security and happiness.

Jesus says quite sharply....

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." - Matthew 6:24

Notice he **didn't say** you **should not** serve both God and money. He said you cannot. It's impossible.

Giving confronts the power of materialism....giving is the cure for materialism. [3]

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them... to be generous and willing to share. In this way... they will take hold of the life that is True Life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19

How will we overcome materialism? By giving. Materialism is all about getting. The only antidote, *the only antidote* to materialism is giving.

Few people want to believe that they are materialistic... God says...check your grip. Look at how you give.

God dares us to give to confront the power that money can represent.

4. Giving faithfully reveals our CHARACTER.

In other words, it shows what kind of heart you really have. It shows, Do I have a selfish heart or do I have an unselfish heart? Do I have a generous heart or do I have a stingy heart? Giving – generosity – shows what my heart is really like.

In fact the **Bible says that God uses money to test what's really inside of you.** And he uses money to test and see if he can trust you with more. He says if you're faithful with little things I'll give you more things.

Jesus wanted us to understand this. He said:

"If you are untrustworthy with worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?" - Luke 16:11 (NLT)

You may not realize this but the rewards and responsibilities that you have in heaven are going to be based on how you manage your money.

When we think we can separate the material world from the spiritual world...we are wrong. We may think that our spiritual nature can be separated from how we relate to material possessions...we are wrong.

God looks at how we manage material wealth. Does how we use material wealth show that we are committed to his purposes? Does it reflect that we are responsible to our communal responsibility?

God dares us to give to show if we are trustworthy.

5. Giving generously EXPANDS our world...and the scope of our influence.

"The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy will get smaller and smaller." - Proverb 11:24 (Mes)

"Those who give generously to those in need... will never be forgotten ... they will have influence and honor." - Psalm 112:9 (NLT)

Giving to God's purposes... influences eternity...invests in eternity.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with using money to meet our temporal needs. But they are temporary...whether a meal that lasts an hour or a material possession that lasts a few years. But that which reflects God's Kingdom...his will...his rule... will have no end.

God dares us to give to enjoy greater influence.

6. Giving in faith creates the opportunity to experience GOD'S PROVISION.

As God said in Malachi... he wants to show that he is faithful. He can't do that before we give... because that removes any sense of trust...faith. Rather, God calls on us to give and experience how he will provide.

Malachi 3:10-11

"...see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty.

God dares us to give to allow experiencing His provision.

**So.... Before we close...let's quick get some clarity on...
How Can We Become Daring Givers?**

1. Give FIRST to our role as a partner with God.

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine." - Proverbs 3:9-10

Giving to God's work from the first showed faith. They had to trust God for remaining portion of their harvest to come. [4]

If we give from what is left over...we will not experience faith. If we give from what's "extra", we won't exercise faith.

2. Establish a foundation of giving PROPORTIONATELY to what we have received.

"On every Lord's Day, each of you should put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering." 1 Cor. 16:2 [NLT]

My giving recognizes God's value for the natural flow and fairness of giving in proportion to what I have received.

3. Develop a LIFE-PATTERN of giving that reflects your faith.

We live in a world that likes to capture bigger than life dramatic moments... heroic moments...and it can focus us on dreaming of one day doing something huge. But faith is a way of life. It's not reflected in a life moment...but a life pattern. [5]

A life pattern is the way a person structures his or her life. A pattern is built or drawn from the values that a person develops over time. These values come from many different sources including family, friends, culture, and God.

When a person becomes a follower of Jesus they are discovering and entering a whole new understanding of reality.

Our maturity involves a process of reorienting our perspectives and patterns.

This type of life-pattern has been served by the new ways in which we can **automate the important.**

And we have always understood that our first responsibility is to our local communal living body of Christ. We believe that we are first and foremost responsible for our **local embodiment of Christ**...and give to other specific causes only after that primary responsibility.

4. Give to faithful hands.

"We don't want anyone to find fault with the way we are administering this generous gift. We intend to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of people." - 2 Corinthians 8:20-21 (GW)

"Giving that reflects faith is that which gives up our personal control ...but not our conscience regarding integrity."

This is why the Governing Board of Elders of the Westside Vineyard provide accountability and assessment in the use of all financial resources. They embrace their call to provide integrity and impact to what has been given to God and His purposes.

5. Give from the heart...compelled by the law of GRACE.

Rules can teach us...but they can't change us.

God had set forth laws... that revealed our obligations. Those rules... those laws... revealed how we have no ability to claim we are perfect and able to be worthy of God's love.

That is where we are met in Christ. When we receive his life... he begins to form hearts that actually desire to be partners with God.

When we comprehend the grace of God... what he has done in giving himself... it becomes our greatest joy to invest our lives and resources to help spread the grace of God. [4]

CLOSING:

I want to close our time... simply hearing words which capture this grace.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 10-12 (NIV)

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work....

¹⁰ *Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. ¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.*

Notes:

1. See also:

“You are generous because of your faith.” Philemon 1:6

“The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives.” Deuteronomy 14:23b (LB)

“Your heart will be wherever your treasure is.” Matthew 6:21 (NCV)

2. Matthew 24:45-51; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27

3. We need to confront the foolish attachments we can give to money and material possessions.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 (NLT)

People who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

Never does God refer to money as evil...in fact it's a part of what we are given as a trust. The problem are the attachments we give to money...value... security... significance... TRUST.

Proverbs 11:28 (CEV)

Trust in your wealth, and you will be a failure, but God's people will prosper like healthy plants.

4. The role of the first tenth. “ When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce... the sacred portion...” – Duet 26: 12-13

We hear that the first tenth was referred to as a sacred portion. It may be fitting to consider that some take this to infer that the first tenth was God's portion. But the larger truth is that everything comes from God... we are managers...and the sacred portion didn't represent what was God's...but rather it represented how they lived as partners. God provided through them.

5. Rich Nathan's suggestion seems fitting:

"If you are paid weekly, give weekly. If you are paid monthly, write a check monthly. If you are given a bonus, then write a check on your bonus. If receive a financial gift, write a check on the gift. If you receive an inheritance, write a check on the inheritance. Generous people have developed a discipline of regular giving on all of their income. Generous people have developed giving as a way of life that transcends the ups and downs of their emotions." - Rich Nathan

6. Paul also speaks of the "grace of giving." - "Just as you excel in everything else... see that you also excel in the grace of giving." - 2 Cor 8:7