

Kingdom Fit - Finances July 8, 2019

***"No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom."
Luke 9:62 CSB***

It takes discipline to keep your hand to the plow. Jesus is speaking of two men who were not willing to sacrifice to follow Him, but the lesson is for all of us.

"Train yourself for the purpose of godliness."

1 Timothy 4:7 CSB.

Or, "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."

No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
Hebrews 12:11 CSB

So we embarked upon a series of messages concerning the four areas that we must remain disciplined so we may remain kingdom fit. Last time we discussed healthy relationships.

Choose your friends wisely.

Spend your discretionary time with those who challenge you to be better.

Develop and maintain healthy relationships that produce accountability and strength.

Discipline number 2 is Healthy finances.

The Bible is full of accounts of the healthy and unhealthy finances.

Simple terms:

assets - own

liabilities - owe

income - earn

Healthy Use of Assets

In the Old Testament, the Hebrews escape from Egypt is a picture of believers' freedom from the bondage of sin. Before they left Egypt, Moses instructed them to ask for gold, silver, bronze and clothing from the Egyptians. (Assets)

"Each woman will ask her neighbor and any woman staying in her house for silver and gold jewelry, and clothing, and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians." Exodus 3:22 CSB

Now announce to the people that both men and women should ask their neighbors for silver and gold items." Exodus 11:2 CSB

The Israelites acted on Moses's word and asked the Egyptians for silver and gold items and for clothing. Exodus 12:35 CSB

Those who knew that God would supply their every need gave to the cause of the tabernacle. Those who did not trust in God's ability to provide kept back some, if not all, of their assets for themselves.

However, they had been promised the richest of God's provisions when they entered Israel.

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give you — a land with large and beautiful cities that you did not build, 11 houses full of every good thing that you did not fill them with, cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant — and when you eat and are satisfied, 12 be careful not to forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery." (Deuteronomy 6:10-12 CSB)

So by faith many of the former Jewish slaves used the riches of Egypt to build the tabernacle. They brought the riches they received while in bondage to freedom.

The Lord spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell the Israelites to take an offering for me. You are to take my offering from everyone who is willing to give.

3 This is the offering you are to receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; 5 ram skins dyed red and fine leather; acacia wood;

6 oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7 and onyx along with other gemstones for mounting on the ephod and breastpiece.

8 "They are to make a sanctuary for me so that I may dwell among them. 9 You must make it according to all that I show you — the pattern of the tabernacle as well as the pattern of all its furnishings. Exodus 25:1 - 9 CSB

Afterwards, Moses spent time with God on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments. The people became weary of waiting. The ones who did not give all to the project of the tabernacle took their remaining assets and sinned against God. The excess was used to build a golden calf.

When Moses entered the camp he destroyed the calf along with the wealth they had kept for themselves.

As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became enraged and threw the tablets out of his hands, smashing them at the base of the mountain. 20 He took the calf they had made, burned it up, and ground it to

powder. He scattered the powder over the surface of the water and forced the Israelites to drink the water. (Exodus 32:19 - 20 CSB)

Principle #1: The degree of your faith will be revealed by the use of your assets.

Healthy Use of Income

In the New Testament, after the resurrection, Peter led others to leave the life of faith and return to the life he knew. They were without funds to go on. As long as they were with Jesus, He took care of their every need. Now He was gone and so was their income. So Peter leads the others into returning to their old way of producing income.

However, that could never work.

"I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them. "We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.4 When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. 5 "Friends," Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you?" "No," they answered. (John 21:3 - 5 CSB)

Following Jesus' command to cast the net on the other side, he found success. Peter leaps from the boat and swims to Jesus. There he finds Jesus cooking breakfast.

In John 21:9 Jesus already had fish on the fire.

Peter didn't bring anything to Jesus He didn't already have.

Application

When you were born again you were born into a new economy. Much of it seems contrary to human wisdom. Here are two verses that clearly state this new principle.

There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way of death. Proverbs 14:12

Trust in the Lord with your whole heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5

Visual:

Assets - kiddie pool of water

Liabilities - a hole in your kiddie pool

Income - water hose pouring into pool

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus introduced this new kingdom financial principal.

Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure — pressed down, shaken together, and running over — will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38 CSB)

Principle #2: Giving, not getting, is God’s way of increasing financial blessings.

You can’t give it away fast enough.

The result will be a life of blessing too big for one generation.

A good man leaves an inheritance to his grandchildren, but the sinner’s wealth is stored up for the righteous. Proverbs 13:22