

This Summer: Why I Give
Part 1 of 4
Pastor Ken

I. Introduction

- a. Summers are great for going to the beach, family reunions, vacationing, and many other good things.
- b. If we are not careful, the summer can also be a time where we can begin to:
 - i. Grow lukewarm in our walk with God
 - ii. Fall away from our devotion time
 - iii. Become a little lax in the principles we live by.
 - iv. Step back or stand still spiritually in the summer.
- c. However, we all can 'FLIP IT;' do the opposite of what tends to happen during the summer.
 - i. For example:
 - 1. Strengthening our faith instead of letting it become weak
 - 2. Putting God first and working on being who He called us to be instead of giving into temptation
- d. This four part series will cover the "whys" of being purposeful in avoiding common pitfalls of the summer to help us understand and build unity in the church:
 - i. Why I Give
 - ii. Why I Stay Connected
 - iii. Why I Pursue God
 - iv. Why I serve

II. Generosity

- a. Generosity is one of the most important principles of the Christian faith that makes us most like God.
- b. Generosity is when you give up something of value for something that has greater value.
- c. God will ask us to give up something of value for something of greater value.
 - i. For example, Genesis 22 talks about Abraham and his wife Sarah.
 - 1. God made a promise to Abraham that he was going to bless him with a son, and nations would be blessed out of his lineage.
 - 2. The only problem was that Sarah couldn't have children and was now 90 years old.
 - 3. Sarah took matters into her own hands and went against God's plan by allowing her servant Haggai to give Abraham a child.

4. Haggai had a baby named Ishmael, but he was not the promised child God said would come through Sarah's womb.
 5. God's promise comes to pass through the miracle of making Abraham and Sarah parents at 100 and 90 years old.
 6. Abraham loved Isaac and raised him well.
 7. God decided to test Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac as an offering when he was about 13 years old to see what was in Abraham's heart.
 8. Abraham agreed to obey God, but was stopped by an Angel of the Lord just before sacrificing his son.
 9. At the same moment, God provided a ram in the bush to sacrifice instead of Isaac.
 10. God was willing to multiply Abraham's descendants and make them as numerous as the stars because Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.
- d. Jesus looks at what we give to see where our heart is.
 - e. When God asked Abraham to give up his son, it wasn't because God wanted his son.
 - i. God wanted his faith so that he could multiply his son, and make him the father of many nations.

Matthew 6:21 NIV

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also

- f. Time and talent are important things we can give to honor God.
- g. This scripture focuses on directing our money towards the things of God.

III. 3 Lessons from the widow's generosity

- a. Mark 12:41 tells the story of the widow's mite, which tells of a widow who gave two cents during an offering.
 - i. Jesus publicly recognized her offering because she gave everything she had out of poverty while the rich gave out of their abundance.
- b. Jesus watches what we give.
 - i. He was standing over the offering looking at what people gave.
- c. Jesus allowed her to give even though she was poor.
 - i. He could have stopped her and encouraged her to keep what she had.
 - ii. However, giving is an investment, not an expense.
- d. It was the percentage of her income, not the actual amount, that she gave that inspired Jesus to recognize her publicly.
 - i. An offering of \$100,000 for a wealthy person making a million dollars does not compare to this woman's sacrifice.

- ii. God doesn't want us to give equal amounts, but he does want us to give a certain percentage.

IV. Tithing

- a. The tithe is giving a tenth, or ten percent of our increase.
- b. Tithing is the one area that God gives believers the opportunity to test him in to see if His Word doesn't work.
- c. Tithing can help us grow in God, trust Him, and realign our priorities as God blesses us.

Malachi 3:6-12

⁶“For I am the LORD, I do not change;
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

⁷Yet from the days of your fathers
You have gone away from My ordinances
And have not kept them.

Return to Me, and I will return to you,”
Says the LORD of hosts.

“But you said,
‘In what way shall we return?’

⁸“Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
‘In what way have we robbed You?’
In tithes and offerings.

⁹You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.

¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,”
Says the LORD of hosts,
“If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.

¹¹“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,”
Says the LORD of hosts;

¹²“And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be a delightful land, ...”

- d. Tithing can help us grow in God, trust Him, and realign our priorities as God blesses us.

- e. The truth is that some people eat or spend their seed when they should be sowing their tithing seed.
 - i. They may say they cannot afford to tithe when they really have other priorities.
 - 1. i.e., traveling, eating out, Netflix, cell phone bills
- f. God never intended to receive what we have left financially.
- g. The sacrifices and priority rearrangements we may have to make to put God first in our budgets and giving do compare to what we gain in return.
 - i. He promises to reward our giving pressed, down shaken together and running over.

V. Why I Give?

- a. Tithing can have more meaning and become more consistent when we think about why we give.
- b. Examples include:
 - i. I want to obey God
 - ii. I trust God more than anything else
 - iii. Everything I have belongs to Him
 - iv. I know that when I give he multiplies it and gives it back to me
 - v. It changes people's lives when I give.
 - vi. My giving causes people to be saved, people to be healed, and people to be reached that are far from God.
- c. We have to give up what we have in order to get what we want to have.
 - i. God's open hand to release what He has for us requires an open heart to release our own priorities.

VI. How to prioritize giving this summer

- a. Give to God first and cut out everything that we don't need to live
 - i. Food, water, shelter and air
- b. Increase giving over the summer months
- c. Setup automatic giving