

Order Week 1

Two Legs

Galatians 5:1 (NIV)

It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

- Many people are saved but not free. Right with God but things on the inside are not right. "Fine" but not Free.
- God is the one who frees us but we've decided we are taking responsibility for our freedom.
- One of the areas where many are burdened, and not free is finances. This isn't always about the amount of resources we have. It's about ordering them God's way.
- We heard very clearly that this was an area that God wanted us to focus on this year. He loves you, He has a plan for your finances, and He wants you to stand firm in His freedom.

You've been Growing in Generosity but...

- Giving but still in debt
- Giving but still struggling to make ends meet
- Get extra but then it disappears
- Eyes are opened to opportunities but not in a position to meet the needs
- Given up and went back to old ways

Why? Giving is only one part of being blessed.

Example: Grooming: wash your hair, put on deodorant, brush your teeth. "I combed my hair but I still stink." We can't just pick one part of God's order and expect the benefits.

Second Component of Blessing: Stewardship

- It's not a bad word!
- We think this only about money, but stewardship is about every area of life.
- **Oikonomia:** Greek for Stewardship AND Economy- *House Law. No distinction for early Christians.* (God has a House Law, or economy/order of stewardship, that supersedes the world's economy)

Stewardship: *The process of being responsible with someone else's property while it is entrusted.*

Biblical Stewardship: *Recognition and faithful management of God's gifts, including time, talents, possessions, and resources, for the purpose of advancing God's kingdom and serving others.*

Object Lesson: *Have someone stand next to me on one leg awkwardly for an extended time. Then using this through point one showing that it's difficult to build the Kingdom when we don't stand firmly on both legs of blessing: Stewardship and Generosity.*

1. It Takes 2 Legs.

- If you are going to move forward in life, it takes 2 legs.
- The 2 legs of Blessed are Stewardship and Generosity
- If you are generous but not a good steward, then God will not open the windows of Heaven over you. Why? Because you won't manage them well. It'll get wasted
- If you're a good steward, but not generous (tight); then God won't bless this alone because His whole goal is to get resources to the ones that need it. (Blessed to be a blessing)

Ex: the cartoon with one foot nailed to the floor just walks in circles. This is a picture of Christians who only live one leg of blessing.

Illustrate: God's order for blessing- WORLD'S NEED – US – GOD'S SUPPLY

Need on one side: Food, Medicine, Water, the Gospel, New Churches

Supply on the other side: God owns it all!

Who is in the middle? We are!!

- God is a good investor. He wants to get His supply over there and use us to do it. But, if we don't steward and give it, He'll move on to someone else.
- Here's why it takes 2 legs...

God is looking for rivers, not reservoirs.

Genesis 12:2 (NKJV)

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you. And make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.

- Blessing is all God's idea
- He wants to bless His kids so they will be a blessing.

2. Why Money?

- Why do we connect blessing to money? The Bible talks A LOT about money

- Every time someone worshiped, they brought an offering. God commanded offerings
- God set up tithing...it wasn't invented by a preacher.
- Jesus too: 16 of 38 parables talk about money and possessions

Ex: *Was Jesus trying to get their money? Does God need my money? Does the church need my money? No! Well, you use my money to do this or that? No, the Church is God's and He uses HIS money to build HIS church and do this and that. (Be careful calling what belongs to God, yours.)*

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- One of the most misunderstood scriptures in the Bible.
- Your treasure doesn't follow your heart. Your heart follows your treasure.
- Jesus said, "will be" meaning it's not there yet but it will be when I put my treasure there.

3. Being a Blessing

- God blesses us for 2 reasons:
 1. **He loves us.** You bless your kids because you love them. So does God!
 - Nothing wrong with wanting to live in a safe neighborhood, wanting more bedrooms so the kids don't have to share, and Getting braces if they need it. Driving a dependable car. Further education. Plan for retirement.
 - The enemy will try to condemn you, calling you materialistic.
 2. **To Be a Blessing**

1 Chronicles 4:9 (NKJV)

⁹ Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name ^[a]Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."

- Jabez in Hebrew means pain, hurt, or sorrow

¹⁰ And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my ^[a]territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

- So He prayed for God to bless Him. Was that okay? Was it evil? Then why would God grant it?
- And God called the man that prayed it, more honorable.
- An honorable person prayed for God to bless them and God granted it. Why? So they could be a blessing.

It is not wrong to ask God to bless you so you can be a blessing!

- The enemy wants us to keep people in “not enough” or “just enough” while God wants to position us in “more than enough” Beyond blessed!

God’s Order for Resources

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (Message)

6-7 Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.

8-11 God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you’re ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it,

*He throws caution to the winds, giving to the needy in reckless abandon.
His right-living, right-giving ways never run out, never wear out.*

This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.

- What a dream life?!? Paul says, “Make up your mind”
- Where is the something that He gives us to give? Learning God’s order will answer this question.
- Make up your mind, and use your legs: generosity and stewardship.
- Grow Nights return next week!!