

FAITHFUL TO THE MISSION

THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE IN GIVING

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There Are 'Kingdom of Heaven' Laws on Financial Management

Your heart follows your treasure:

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21, NIVUK)

Who is really first in our lives – look at our bank statement! (i.e. Cain and Abel, Genesis 4)

Reaping and sowing principle:

So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. (Matthew 6:31-33, NLT)

Major deceptions

- 'I would do much better if I had more (NO – we actually need to show we can successfully manage what we have now.)
- 'I give to get' (NO – 'I get to give' and 'give to give.')

Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment. (James 5:1-3, NLT)

- Any 'laws' around finance apply to the Old Testament only. (NO – half of all Jesus teaching involved money and materialism, and He instructed His followers to tithe.)

Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practised the latter without leaving the former undone. (Luke 11:42, NIVUK)

The Parable of The Talents – The kingdom of heaven is like... (Matthew 25:14-29)

- The law of ownership – it was the master who gave the talents. Everything we have belongs to God. We do not have the right to do what we like with our money.

He did all this so you would never say to yourself, 'I have achieved this wealth with my own strength and energy.' Remember the Lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfil the covenant, he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath. (Deuteronomy 8:17-18, NLT)

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. (Psalms 24:1, NLT)

Don't you realise that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honour God with your body. (1 Corinthians, 6:19-20 NLT)

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, NLT)

- Law of stewardship – appreciate and look after what you have. Being faithful with little means God can trust us to be faithful in much.

Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:11-13, NLT)

- Law of sowing and reaping. ('blessed to be a blessing')

Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:24-25, NLT)

- Giving with the right heart.

Remember this a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. (2 Corinthians 9:6-10, NLT)

Tithing – The Foundation of Kingdom Money Management

Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!" (Malachi 3:8-10, NLT)

This is the only command where God invites us to 'put Him to the test'. Don't dismiss it before trying it!

- 10% of our gross income
- It belongs to God – we bring it - not give it – we cannot give what is not ours!

When the people of Israel heard these requirements, they responded generously by bringing the first share of their grain, new wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of their fields. They brought a large quantity, a tithe of all they produced. (2 Chronicles 31:5, NLT)

- Abraham / Jacob tithed (400 years before the law of Moses. See also Hebrews 7:1-9)

And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. (Genesis 14:18-20, NLT)

And this memorial pillar I have set up will become a place for worshiping God, and I will present to God a tenth of everything he gives me. (Genesis 28:22 NLT)

- To go to our local church family – remember the church is the bride of Christ. This is deeply personal to Jesus.

In addition, he required the people in Jerusalem to bring a portion of their goods to the priests and Levites, so they could devote themselves fully to the Law of the Lord. (2 Chronicles, 31:4 NLT)

And once more all the people of Judah began bringing their tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the Temple storerooms. (Nehemiah 13:12, NLT)

- It should be the first 'bill' we pay every month, in faith. (2 Chronicles 31:5)
- There are consequences when we do not obey God's commands. Do we want to keep 100% and go through life cursed or keep 90% and have it blessed? Not tithing is robbing God.
- Real giving (first fruits, offerings, giving to the needy) starts once we have tithed.

Managing our finances righteously is one of the most challenging aspects of our Christian walk and most people find this very difficult. But it is also the route to the greatest blessings and real prosperity. Satan does not want us to be blessed and he doesn't want the church to win souls (this takes money) and he will use every excuse and reason to stop us tithing and giving offerings and first fruits. This message should be a challenge – not a condemnation. Obedience may mean we have to make adjustments to our lifestyle. If you are finding this area of your life very hard please don't feel condemned but feel free to come and talk to one of us!