

THE BLESSED LIFE part 3

“An understanding heart”

“Being Blessed means having supernatural power working for you”

WEEK 1: AN OPEN HEART! Inviting God into the conversation!

- Money stresses most people out! God wants to help!
- Cast your cares.....take my yoke.
- Owner verses Renter (Steward) FREEDOM

WEEK 2: A WILLING HEART: GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER

- Be willing and obedient
- One gift, 2 responses: Judas & Mary
- Revealed the heart! (Selfish or grateful)

TODAY: AN UNDERSTANDING HEART: “THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRST”

A CONTENT HEART: FIGHTING GREED AND WANTING MORE

A CURIOUS HEART: UNDERSTANDING THE TEST! TITHING

A TRUSTING HEART: MIRACLE HAPPENS WHEN YOU GIVE IT AWAY

The principal of the FIRST

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

CONTEXT: Treasures in heaven, worry on this earth

-Something to be said about prioritization.

“First things First”

2 PRINCIPALS FROM 3500 YEARS AGO:

1) The first fruits

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

-Honor God FIRST and THEN he will increase the rest!

Leviticus 27:30 “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.”

-The TITHE Belongs to God.....so we RETURN it to him (not give)

Exodus 23:19 “Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God.

-notice the word BEST

-notice also where it goes.....to the House of the Lord your God

Look at this story:

Genesis 4:1-7 Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.”² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering,⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.⁶ Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

-What was the difference in their gifts? THEIR HEARTS!!!!

Genesis 4:3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.

Some key phrases:

-In the course of time.....not right away!

-Cain brought SOME of the fruits!

AS COMPARED TO ABEL:

Genesis 4:4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock.

-MAIN DIFFERENCE: Leftovers versus the Best of the Best!

-Attitude of the heart: Give just enough to look generous!

Genesis 4:4-7 The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering,⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?”

Clearly there was a lesson about the FIRST!

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

It takes more faith to give FIRST!

2) The first born

Exodus 13:1-2 The Lord said to Moses, ²“Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal.”

Consecrate: to set aside, to make or declare sacred or holy.

-God was saying: The firstborn belongs to me.

Exodus 13:12-13 You are to give over to the Lord the first offspring of every womb. All the firstborn males of your livestock belong to the Lord.¹³ Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.

Firstborn male of your livestock shall belong to the lord.

-The firstborn was either to be SACRIFICED or REDEEMED

REDEEM: To free from captivity by paying a ransom

So...every first born was to be sacrificed, unless it was redeemed.

Exodus 13:13 Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.

If it was unclean, it needed to be redeemed by the blood of a lamb.

2 classifications of animals here:

- Donkey represents unclean animals
- Lamb represents a clean animal

-Redeem a donkey with a lamb.....or break a neck?

-The unclean donkey was deserving of death, but could be redeemed!

THIS Principal is actually talking about Jesus.

-We are born with sin nature.....unclean

-Jesus was born clean

The clean had to be sacrificed so the unclean could be redeemed.

OTHER FORESHADOWING:

-Abraham asked to sacrifice Isaac!

GOD SAYS: TRUST ME WITH YOUR FIRST.....I WILL BLESS THE REST!

IT TAKES MORE FAITH TO GIVE THE “FIRST”

BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO TRUST GOD FOR THE “REST”

GOD GAVE US HIS BEST!

Colossians 1:15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

1 Corinthians 15:20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

LAST WEEK: MARY GAVE OUT OF A GRATEFUL HEART!

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

1) Where are you at?

-Does God get your leftovers? Or does he get your best!

-Practical challenge: Give FIRST!

2) Where could you go?

-See what impact you could make!!

