

I. Intro

A. Text: **Mk. 12:28-34**

²⁸ Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, greater is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. ³³ And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him. (Mk. 12:28-34)

B. ReCap

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. (1 Tim. 6:17)

1. Rich is a moving target
 - a. Problems with Identification
 - b. Issues with haughtiness
 - c. Issues with misplaced trust
2. Trust in Uncertain of Riches rather than the Unchanging God.
3. Practical tips to help us spend well.
 - a. Stay out of Debt.
 - b. Budget

- c. Pay Taxes
- d. Save for a rainy Day
- e. Invest For the Future

II. There Is A Reason That We Give

A. We Give Because of Love

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- 1. Love God (**Deut. 6:4-5**) → Love People (**Lev. 19:18**)
 - a. Supreme Goal: Love God with everything.
 - i. Heart, mind, soul
 - ii. From the very beginning, worship has always been connected to the concept of sacrifice.
 - b. When we love God above all others. We begin to love what He loves: People.
 - i. Passionate about orphans
 - ii. Passionate about widows
 - iii. Passionate about those who are oppressed
- 2. Everything we do as children of God is a response to a Holy, righteous, compassionate, jealous God.
 - a. We are loved... so _____
 - i. **1 John 4:19:** “We love because He first loved us”.
 - b. Giving is no different: When we give, we give as a response....

- i. **John 3:16:** "For God so loved the world, that He gave..."
- c. Biblical giving is always motivated by love, not obligation.

**It's all about love. Everything we do (including our giving) is all about love!*

- 3. Jesus understood that our **hearts** are tied to our wallets.
 - a. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (**Matt. 6:21**)
- 4. Rich Young Ruler: Why else would He turn the salvation conversation with the Rich Young Ruler into a conversation about money?

¹⁷ Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " ²⁰ And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." ²¹ Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." ²² But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (**Mk. 10:17-22**)

- a. Sell what you have and give to the poor.
 - i. Simply being a philanthropist will never get you into the Kingdom of God.
 - ii. God is calling us to exalt Him alone as the King of our Hearts.
 - iii. Are you willing to forsake all and follow me?
- b. Jesus is pointing to this young man's heart (exposed by the X-ray machine) called money...

5. Zacchaeus

Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. ²Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." ⁶So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." ⁸Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." ⁹And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk. 19:1-10)

- a. God, I love you more than what my hands have gained me.

B. We Give Out of Gratitude.

¹⁴ When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. ¹⁵ He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. ¹⁶ He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people. ¹⁷ Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. (Gen. 14:14-20)

1. **The Tithe**: literally means "a tenth"
 - a. First mention of giving tithes was in Gen. 14:18-20

*Beautiful picture of freely honoring God by investing in others.

2. We've been mistaught the concept of tithing as a matter of an obligation
 - i. We gotta!
 - ii. Just give God his portion so we can get Him off our backs and we can do whatever we want with the other 90%.
 - iii. How much belongs to God (10%)?
 - iv. Actually, it ALL belongs to Him.
- b. Don't ever think that you're doing something special by giving God something material.
 - i. God doesn't need our money.
 - ii. The money we have, looks like it's ours. But it belongs to God.
- c. Returning God the first 10% actually declares that we agree that the other 90% belongs to Him. The 10% is but a representation of the whole.
 - i. Act of Faith.
 - ii. Agreement with heaven.
- d. A Benefit: Proportionate Giving (10%)
 - i. Cool because you don't have to measure up to what everyone else is doing.
 - ii. Started Tithing in 1997

3. Question: *Wasn't the tithe tied to the law? If we are no longer under the law, why the talk about tithing?*
 - a. Admission: You actually don't hear me mention tithing much (although I tithe and more).
 - b. Concept pre-dates the law by several hundred years.
 - c. The law was a schoolmaster to set some guidelines so that we could see.
 - d. Jesus didn't come to destroy the law, He came to fulfill it.

- e. **Matt. 5:21**: *“Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven”.*
- 4. Holy Spirit alone empowers us to freely go above and beyond “*the rule*”.
 - a. 10% is a good place to start
 - i. I get to freely give God 10% of His resources that someone else will then steward.
 - ii. With increase in mind.
 - b. Act of faith.
 - c. Doesn’t have to stop there (11%, 12%).

C. We Give God the First Place.

“Honor God with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase”
(Prov. 3:9)

- 1. We steward/manage a corporation that God owns called “Everything”.
 - a. God is the owner. We just manage.
 - b. If Uncle Sam gets his off the top, why shouldn’t God. He’s the owner of Everything!
 - c. Anything less than first place is out of order!
- 2. Most of our issues in finances come from misplaced priorities.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matt. 6:33)

- a. As we budget our Father’s resources, why not make informed, intelligent, Holy Spirit empowered decisions about returning to Him the first things?
 - i. Why not pray about it before we get to church?

- ii. Why not pray about it before we spend a dime?
- iii. Automatic deposit → Me first spending
- b. The modern church has produced a generation of irresponsible, compulsive givers.
 - i. Hear a good sermon so you give a certain amount.
 - ii. Sitting among certain people, so you give a certain amount so you don't look bad.
- c. **Question:** Should I give to God or should I pay my rent?
 - i. **1 Tim. 5:8:** *But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel/unbeliever*

3. Mark the priorities first: Budget Demonstration
 - a. First: God
 - b. Second: Savings, rent, food
 - c. Third: Cell phone, Cable

D. We Bring Our Giving into the House

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, so that there may be meat in Mine house.
(Mal. 3:10)

1. The church is the vehicle in which Jesus moves and acts in the earth.
 - a. As we grow in the grace of giving, the church grows in its ability to impact the region.
 - b. The gospel is dispersed throughout all the earth (through domestic and international missions) off the manpower and the financial power of the church.
 - i. Not only did God partner with the church to fulfill His mission.
 - ii. But He also gave individuals in the church the resources to fulfill His mission.
- c. Don Parker visited on December 9, 2018.

- i. Funded his mission trip to the Philippines (Jan. 8-17)
- ii. Nearly 1,000 people heard the gospel for the first time.
- iii. 175 people made professions of faith to the Lord.
- iv. Our new additions to the family are partly a result of your heartfelt generosity to the Lord.

- 2. Church to be fully resourced from within.
 - a. Every dollar we need to do what God has called us to do, is already here.
 - b. **Prov. 13:22:** *The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the righteous.*
 - c. Traveling Team Missions Stats: *"The church currently has 3x the financial resources and 9x the manpower to complete the great commission."¹*
 - i. Preach the gospel to every people group.

III. My Prayer For Total Restoration Church

A. Selfless Givers: Culture of Giving

B. Set the Example: Starts at the top.

- 1. TRC gives 10% of all increase to start new churches just like us.

C. 8 Week Challenge

¹⁰ *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test 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 a blessing until it overflows. ¹¹ Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:10-11)*

- 1. Test God
 - a. Connection Cards

2. The Gross or the Net?
 - a. Only 2 percent of Christians tithe...
3. I'd rather return the tithe and live with a supernatural blessing on my 90% than to have the full 100% in my pocket without the blessing of God on it.
4. Generous giving is not about doling out more money. It's about re-directing the heart so that we become passionate about the things that Christ is passionate about (**Gordon MacDonald**).