

## Treasure Principle Part 6



### Key #5 – Giving is the antidote to materialism

#### 1 Timothy 6 : 17-19

- Note that Christians are the audience here
- Paul firstly warns against arrogance – wealth can cause arrogance, a belief that we can take care of ourselves without God’s provision
- Instead of this self sufficient arrogance, Christians should put their hope in God, to trust Him to take care of His children
- Paul then goes on to describe the antidote. If materialism is the venom that can kill us spiritually, then the antidote is to do good deeds, to be generous and willing to share.
- We will then lay up for ourselves treasures in the age to come.

**We overcome materialism by giving generously. This makes sense since our hearts follow our money. if we give our money away to causes that are important to God, this will help us to stay focused on God rather than on material things.**

#### Matthew 19 : 16 -22

- Jesus knew that the rich young man’s heart needed to change and that giving generously would help achieve this
- But he was not willing to give in order to be cured from his materialism.

*What is so special about giving ? What happens when we give generously and are willing to share ?*

- *Giving is a vivid reminder and demonstration that it is all about God and not about us*
- *It reminds us that we exist for him rather than the other way around*
- *Giving focuses us on God’s higher purpose rather than our desires*
- *Giving affirms Jesus’ lordship - it dethrones us and exalts him*
- *When we give we start to recognize God as the true owner, ourselves as servants, and others as the intended beneficiaries of what God has entrusted to us*
- *Giving doesn’t strip us of vested interests but shifts our vested interests from the present age to the age to come*
- *Giving in any form breaks selfishness in our hearts*

***These truths about giving go far beyond money – they are true of time, experience, expertise, etc. Everything that God has blessed or entrusted us with.***

#### Leviticus 27 : 30

- The meaning of the word tithe is “a tenth part”
- Ten percent of everything they earned was to be given back to God

- That 10% was “holy” to the Lord. It was set apart and was not theirs to keep. If they did keep it God considered it stealing from him.
- There were other “freewill” offerings too, but the 10% was mandatory for people who were going to be part of God’s people

#### Proverbs 3 : 9

- Honoring the Lord is giving the firstfruits
- The firstfruits were the first and best of the crop that was given to God, not the leftovers at the end of the crop

**Principle : God’s people give Him first not last.**

#### Malachi 3 : 8-10

- When his people weren’t giving in this manner God called it robbery
- God didn’t need their tithes, but He knew that hearts follow money and He wanted their hearts
- He wanted what was good for them, and it’s the same with us today
- The Israelites robbed him by not only withholding the mandatory tithes but also withholding their voluntary offerings
- God expected His people to tithe as a minimum level of giving and then to give beyond that, depending on the extent to which they had been blessed by Him
- Vs 10 is not a promise that God will make us rich if we give but we can be assured that he will provide our needs and will bless us with everything we need
- Many of us rob ourselves of God’s blessing because we withhold giving to God

**Principle : God blesses His people by providing more than they need when they give as He wants them to.**

#### Deuteronomy 16 : 10

- God called His people to give freewill offerings in proportion to how much He had blessed them
- This principle doesn’t apply just to finances because God has blessed us in every way ; it applies to our time, energy, resources, finances, possessions, wisdom, etc.

#### Deuteronomy 16 : 16 – 17

**Principle : No matter what kind of year we have had financially, God expects us to give.**

**There is never an excuse to not give to God.**

#### Matthew 23 : 23

- Jesus criticized the fact that they tithed without following the heart of the law of giving to God.
- They needed to tithe of their wealth but also give of themselves and their heart.

**Principle : What God really wants is for us to give our whole selves to him. We fail to do that if we aren’t willing to give financially to him but we also fail to do that if we only give financially so that we don’t have to give of ourselves**

Is tithing still applicable to God's New Covenant people ?

- It is true that there is little mention of tithing in the NT, but it is also true that tithing by God's people is never revoked
- From Genesis we see that giving to God came before the law - this shows that the principle of giving lies outside of the law and is not limited to it
- Every example of New Testament giving actually goes far beyond the tithe; it never falls short of that
- Everything about the New Covenant is that God's people, because of their gratitude and the guiding of the Spirit, have the ability to go far beyond the confines of the law, never below it
- The New Testament does not mandate things as the law does because we are to do those things from our heart rather than because we are following the law

#### Matthew 5 : 27 - 28

- Jesus didn't lower the standard of the OT by shifting the focus to our heart, he actually demands more
- It would be a whole lot easier to follow a rule book than to do things with the right heart which we as God's New Covenant people are called to do

- The tithe is God's historical method to get us on the path of giving
- The tithe starts to break the grip that materialism has on our lives
- The tithe is not a place to stop, it is the place to start; it is the floor of giving not the ceiling; the starting blocks not the finish line

#### Questions for personal reflection

- ❖ **How important are material possessions to you ?**
- ❖ **How generous and willing to share are you ?**
- ❖ **Are you investing your money, time, energy and experience in ways that will last into the age to come ?**
- ❖ **Is your first priority with your salary to give to God ?**
- ❖ **How do you feel about tithing as a minimum level of giving ? Why ?**
- ❖ **Do you have a heart to go beyond this ?**