

FAITH

&

FINANCES

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The Divine Order of Faith

1 Corinthians 14:40

"Let all things be done decently and in order." 1 Cor 14:40

Everything in God's universe has a divine order. Everything in the church is to be according to divine order (Titus 1:5; 1 Corinthians 11:34, Luke 1:1-3). Paul instructed the church how to operate in divine order when it comes to exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:40 When you neglect divine order God's blessing doesn't flow.

Faith has a divine order. As we exercise faith according to its divine order, the blessing of God will flow.

1. THE FIRST ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS HEARING.

"Hear my son, and receive my sayings." Proverbs 4:10

a. (Hearing involves more than reading.) It is believing.

Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1: 21) Receiving the word of the spirit and the spirit of the word. Hearing involves reading, but goes beyond it. We read until there is an impartation of life from the word. "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63

b. Faith is proportionate to the word level in our life.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

" ... How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard.?" Romans 10:14

"Therefore, He who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Galatians 3:5

2. THE SECOND ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS BELIEVING.

a. There can be no faith without hearing. Romans 10: 17

b. Hearing is the vehicle of faith or the opportunity of faith. Romans 4: 17

c. Not every one who hears believes.

"For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it."
Hebrews 4:2

d. When we hear and believe the promise will profit us.

e. We are to imitate the faith of those who inherit the promises of God.

" ... That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promise." Hebrews 6: 12

f. God has said yes to all His promises, He awaits the affirming amen from us.

"For all the promises of God in Him are yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." 2 Corinthians 1: 20

"For as many as are the promises of God, they all find their yes (answer) in Him (Christ). For this reason we also utter the Amen (so be it) to God through Him - that is, in His person and by His agency - to the glory of God." 2 Corinthians 1: 20

Amen identifies the hearer with the promise and confirms that what has been said is truth and that they wish it to be true in their life. Amen is an affirmation of truth and personal faith.

3. THE THIRD ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS SPEAKING.

a. Speaking or confessing is a means of releasing one's faith.

" ... The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart (that is the word of faith we preach). That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:8-10

b. Faith is conceived in the heart by hearing and released with the confession of the mouth.

c. Hearing and speaking constitutes the spirit of faith.

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and therefore speak." 2Cor 4:13

d. Hearing and speaking is according to what is written.

"Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, when the Lord has not commanded it?" Lamentations 3:37

**e. By faith we understand the world was framed by the word of God.
Hebrews 11:3**

Framed - to shape, fashion, form according to pattern or design, to put in order, to fill, arrange all the details.

f. By faith we shape our world by speaking the word of God.

"For assuredly, I say to you whoever says to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says." Mark 11: 23

Wherever you want your life to go, head it in that direction by speaking the word of God.

James 3: 1-4 states: Bridle the tongue and you bridle the whole body. The large ship is turned by a small rudder wherever the pilot desires. A horse follows by the bit in his mouth. We give direction to our life by our mouth.

h. We guide our lives by the rudder of our tongue.

4. THE FOURTH ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS ACTIONS.

"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one shall be blessed in what he does." James 1: 25

a. Faith calls for actions.

- 1.) The woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of his garment, for she said, "if I can but touch the hem of his garment I shall be healed."
- 2.) Peter was told to come to Jesus on the water. He got out of the boat and walked on water. Actually he walked on the word - "come."
- 3.) Martha had to be willing to open the tomb to see the miracle of her brother resurrected.

b. Faith without works is dead faith.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:17

c. Faith with works is complete faith.

"By works faith was made perfect." (Complete) James 2:22

d. Faith is demonstrated in works.

"I will show you my faith by my works." James 2:18

5. THE FIFTH ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS PERSEVERANCE OF PATIENCE.

a. Faith and patience are essential for receiving the promises of God.

"... do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Hebrews 6:12

b. We must persevere in obedience while we are waiting for the promise.

"For you have need of endurance so, that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise." Hebrews 10:36

c. We are to fight the good fight of faith. 1 Timothy 6:12

- 1.) We must fight discouragement because of delay
- 2.) We must fight distraction when delayed.
- 3.) We must fight discouragement because of difficulties encountered while waiting.
- 4.) We must fight spiritual decline during delays.
- 5.) Those who persevere will inherit the promise.

6. THE SIXTH ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS RECEIVING.

a. Receiving is in proportion to our asking.

"You do not have because you do not ask." James 4:2

b. God's children are often reluctant to ask.

Reluctance to ask is illustrated in the experience of King Ahaz in Isaiah 7:1-13

c. God is honored when we ask and glorified when He answers.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ to all generations forever and ever Amen." Eph. 3:20-21

God's mighty power is limited or released through the church according to our "thinking and asking". God begins His work of power in the believer by giving the believer "thoughts" and then that believer "asking" according to those thoughts. This ignites God's mighty power and brings Him glory through His church. We can never think or ask beyond God's ability.

d. Asking and believing results in receiving.

"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Matthew 21 :22

"Therefore I say unto you, What things so ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11 :24 KJV

The progression of faith follows this pathway:

1. Desire
2. Ask
3. Believe
4. Receive (or have)

When do we believe? When we pray. What do we ask for? Whatever you desire. When will we receive? When we pray and believe.

e. Asking according to the will of God gives confidence.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." 1 John 5:14-15

Three times the writer uses the word "know" in these verses to give confidence in our prayers. When we ask according to His will (the word of God is the will of God.) God declares His will by His promises. The word promise means to declare ones intentions or to reveal ones will. The will of God is revealed in His word. We do not have to live in uncertainty when we know the word of God we know the will of God.

f. Behaving reinforces believing and receiving.

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment." 1 John 3:21-33

Both verses speak of "prayer alignment" the vertical alignment is our relationship to God. "Keep his commandments and always do those things pleasing in His sight". The horizontal alignment is our relationship with others. (Including our spouse 1 Peter 3:7) We love and forgive others as He gave us commandment. The prayer alignment places us on solid praying ground to receive what we ask.

7. THE SEVENTH ELEMENT IN THE DIVINE ORDER OF FAITH IS JOY AND GRATITUDE.

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23-24

"Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Hebrews 13:15

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks and he was a Samaritan." Luke 17:15-16

a. Ingratitude is the attitude of our culture. 2 Timothy 3:1-5

b. Ingratitude is the first step to backsliding. Romans 1 :21

c. The believer's attitude is to continually be an attitude of gratitude.

"Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day." PS 71:8

"My praise shall be continually of you." PS 71 :6.

Exercising Your Faith

Luke 17:5-6

"And the apostles said to the Lord, "increase our faith". So the Lord said, "if you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you." Luke 17:6

Faith is the currency of the kingdom of God. Money is the currency of our economy. Nothing is impossible to him who believes.

The disciples recognizing the value of faith made the request "increase our faith". The request implies a deficiency or a lack to be supplied. Jesus spoke not of increasing their faith, but of exercising their faith. They were instructed on exercising the faith they already had. You can't increase what you don't have.

"God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." Romans 12:3

The word "dealt" means to distribute, to divide out as by lot. Each of us have received sufficient faith for our destiny. Faith may grow because it's there. We have it. The word "measure" means portion, extent, capacity, a fit measure.

"To those who have obtained (received) like (faith of the same value) precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 2: 1 Amplified

"And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love, which are in Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 1: 14

1. EXERCISING FAITH IS A DECISION YOU MAKE. Luke 17:6

The word "if" always implies condition. "Jesus said to him, if you can believe all things are possible to him who believes." (Mark 9:23). Thomas made a conscious decision not to believe. "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) Abraham made the choice to believe." (As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations) in the presence of Him whom he believed ... " Romans 4:17

a. The decision of faith is in response to the promise of God.

"And being fully convinced that what He had promised He was able to perform." Romans 4:21

b. The promises of God are as sure (immutable) as God Himself.

"Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His council, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." Hebrews 6:17-18

c. The promise and the oath gives us strong consolation and brings an end to disputers. (KJ strife)

"For men indeed swear by the greater and an oath of confirmation is for them an end to all dispute." Hebrews 6:16

The inward "struggle or strife" to believe is settled when God swears on oath over all His promises. "Lord I believe, help my unbelief. Mark 9:24

2. EXERCISING FAITH IS A ATTITUDE YOU TAKE.

One's attitude is one's inner disposition, that which influences conduct. Faith is an "inside" thing, an issue of the heart. Hebrews 3: 12 speaks of an evil heart of unbelief. Romans 10:9 speaks of believing with the heart.

"Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1

" ... Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

The word "let" implies that the choice we make is the demeanor we take. Christians have a faith thermostat in their heart, they can set it on faith or trouble and fear. Once we choose the setting, it becomes the demeanor from which we face life. The prophet Isaiah chose his demeanor "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For Yah, the Lord is my strength and my song; He also has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2

3. EXERCISING FAITH IS A DECLARATION YOU MAKE.

"If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, be pulled up by the roots and planted in the sea, and it would obey you." Luke 17:6

a. We exercise our faith by verbalizing our faith.

"The righteousness of faith speaks this way " Romans 10:6

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10

" Let us hold fast to our confessions." Hebrews 4:14

"Let us hold fast the confessions of our hope without wavering for He who promises is faithful." Hebrews 10:23

b. "Confession" means to say the same thing or to repeat what someone else has said, mainly what God has said.

c. The word of faith is in our mouth as well as in our heart.

"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith we preach)" Romans 10:8

d. Faith is not a trick performed with our mouth but an affirmation of what is in our heart.

e. We can increase our level of faith by affirming God's word with our mouth.

4. EXERCISING FAITH IS A DIRECTION YOU TAKE.

"By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." Hebrews 11:8

a. Faith determines our decisions, direction and destiny.

b. Abraham did not know the exact destination, but he took the first steps.

c. Abraham's faith caused him to obey.

d. Because of Abraham's obedient faith he arrived at "the place" and received it as an inheritance.

Believers are to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.
Romans 4:12 "For we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Cor 5:7

The walk of faith is not blind faith.

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." Hebrews 11 :27

e. Faith sees what others do not see.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Hebrews 11: 13

f. Faith is born of Holy Spirit sight that sets the direction for our life.

"But as it is written; Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him, but God has revealed them to us through His Spirit for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

g. Spirit revelation imparts to the believer the mind of Christ.

"But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:16 The Holy Spirit in the believer is the mind of Christ in that believer! 1 Corinthians 2:12-16

5. EXERCISING FAITH LEADS TO A DEMONSTRATION OF JOY.

"So the Lord said, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you." Luke 17:6

"Jesus said to her, did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God." John 11:40

"And they were all amazed and they glorified God and were filled with fear saying "We have seen strange things today." Luke 5:26

The Goodness of God

Psalm 119:68

"You are good, and do good " Psalm 119:68

"The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, candid, benevolent and full of good will toward man. He is tenderhearted and of great sympathy and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people."

A.W. Tozer The Knowledge of the Holy

God is good! Essentially good, totally good, always good. The questions people are asking today is not so much, does God exist? But is He good? This truth is essential for believers and all who would know God properly.

"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Psalm 145:9

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5

1. GOD'S GOODNESS IS PERFECT.

"The goodness of God refers to the perfection of His nature" **Arthur W. Tozer, Pink, The Attributes of God.**

a. God's goodness is the highest good.

Jesus responded to "good master" by stating "there is only one good that's God" Matthew 19:16-17

God is the sum of all goodness, the highest good. God's goodness comes from Himself, it is the essence of His eternal nature.

When Moses asked God to show him His glory, in Exodus 33:18, he responded by declaring His eternal attributes:

"Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abounding in goodness, truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sins ... " Exodus 34:5-7

b. The goodness of God is the glory of God.

2. GOD'S GOODNESS IS PROMISED. Jeremiah 32:38-41

"They shall be My people and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from doing them good, but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.

Yes I will rejoice over them to do them good and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul. I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them." Jeremiah 32:38-42

a. The everlasting covenant is the new covenant.

"You can't escape the happiness of this text by thinking it was promised to Israel and not to you. God won't let you get away from Him that easily. When Jeremiah spoke of an "everlasting covenant" that God will make with His people (v 40) he means the "new covenant" described just one chapter earlier. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel .. (Jeremiah 31 :31-34) but this new covenant is the covenant Jesus sealed with His blood.

b. The everlasting covenant promises that God will never turn away from doing us good. Jeremiah 32:40

c. The everlasting covenant promises that God will rejoice to do us good. Jeremiah 32:41

d. The everlasting covenant promises that God will do us good with all His heart and soul. Jeremiah 32:41

e. The everlasting covenant promises that God will secure the covenant for us and our children. (Jeremiah 32:39)

3. GOD'S GOODNESS IS PREPARED.

"Oh how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You which you have prepared for those who trust in You. In the presence of the sons of men. Psalm 31:19

a. God's goodness is great.

"The earth is filled with the goodness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5

Experiencing the Goodness of God

Psalm 119:68

Since God is good! How does one go about experiencing His goodness for themselves?

1. WE EXPERIENCE THE GOODNESS OF GOD BY BELIEVING.

"I would have lost heart, unless, I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm 27:13

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" Psalm 34:8

"The whole outlook of mankind might be changed if we could all believe that we dwell under a friendly sky and that the God of heaven, though exalted in power and majesty is eager to befriend us." **A.W. Tozer, The Knowledge of the Holy.**

a. Our faith in God can rise no higher than our belief in His goodness.

"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." Psalm 145:9

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

b. We must believe that the goodness of God is presently available.

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good." Psalm 34:8

"Oh, how great is Your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear You which you have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the son's of men!" Psalm 31 :19

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Psalm 23:5

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Psalm 23:6

c. We experience all the promises of God by faith.

" Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."
Hebrews 6:12

2. WE EXPERIENCE THE GOODNESS OF GOD BY BEHAVING.

"A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of wicked intentions He will condemn." Proverbs 12:2

" no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."
Psalm 84:11

"The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied from above." Proverbs 14:14

Psalms 34:12-16

a. Experiencing God's goodness is our motivation for good behavior.

"Knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is slave or free." Ephesians 6:8

b. We glorify God by our good behavior.

" that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"
Matthew 5:16

c. We overcome evil with good.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

A little girl was overheard to pray: "Father, make the bad people good and the good people nice."

d. All God's people are to be good and do good.

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works"
Hebrews 10:24

3. WE EXPERIENCE THE GOODNESS OF GOD BY BLESSING.

a. We should bless the Lord.

"Bless the Lord, Oh my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord Oh my soul and forget not all His benefits." Psalm 103:1-2

"Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name for ever and ever." Psalm 145:2

"Bless" (barach) to salute, congratulate, to thank, praise. Similar to the word "eulogy" or "eulogize" to speak well of, praise, exalt.

b. We should bless others.

"No returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing. Knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." 1 Peter 3:9

1.) Blessing is the believers calling

" ... knowing that you were called to this .. " 1 Peter 3:9

" ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:3

"But whatever house you enter, first say, "peace to His house" Luke 10:5

According to Numbers 6:22-27, we fulfill the priestly role by blessing others. According to Revelation 1:5 the priest of God extends God's glory and dominion on the earth".

"Bless, blessing" - the art of declaring or extending through pronouncement, God's favor and goodness upon others. The significance is a righteously administered blessing is not only the good effect of works upon the hearer, but in the fact that the Holy Spirit will endow the words with the power to bring them to pass." Jack Hayford, Hayford's Bible Handbook.

2.) Blessing is contrary to the world's principles.

The word "contrary" in our verse is from our English word counter clockwise. When the believer blesses, it is counter clockwise to the world, the exact opposite of the world.

"Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing." 1 Peter 3:9

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." Romans 12:14

c. When believers bless others they inherit a blessing themselves.

" that you may inherit a blessing"

There are three ways we impart the blessing to others:

- Through our words (Eph 4:29)
- Through our touch (Gen 48:14)
- Through our good deeds (Gal 6:10)

To bless means "to endow with power for success, prosperity, fruitfulness, longevity, etc; in essence the one who is blessed is given a rich and abundant life." **Expository Dictionary of Bible Words.**

When the Impossible Becomes Possible

Luke 1:26-45

"For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1 :37) The preposition "with" describes ones relationship with God. The word with means to be alongside, in the company of, in association with, in agreement with. When we are "with" God the impossible becomes possible. "With"

man this is impossible but with God all things are possible." Matthew 19:26
Verses 1 :28 and 1 :30 the angel uses the preposition "with" God:

"And having come in, the angel said to her, rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women." (V28)

"Then the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (V30)

There are no limits with God, no barriers, no obstacles, no impossibilities. He is the God who cannot fail and when we are with Him we will not fail.

1. THE IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES POSSIBLE WHEN WE HEAR GOD'S WORD.

Three times V28, 30, 35 the scripture states "the angel said to her", the word of God connects us "with God" and when we are with God connected by the word, impossible becomes possible.

"Then Mary said, "Behold the maid servant of the Lord, 'Let it be to me according to your word.'" (1 :38)

"The law of his God is in his heart; None of his steps shall slide" Psalm 37:31

a. The word works.

"For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God which also works effectively in you who believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Works--exercising its super human power in those who adhere to and trust in and rely on it. (Marvin Vincent)

b. The word works effectively.

The phrase "effectively" means to energize, almost always new testament writers use this term for some form of supernatural activity" **Believers Study Bible**

c. The word works effectively in those who:

- 1.) Hear the word
- 2.) Receive
the word
- 3.) Welcome
the word

2. THE IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES POSSIBLE WHEN WE BELIEVE GOD'S WORD.

Luke 1:45

"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord" Luke 1 :45

a. Faith is based on what has been spoken by God.

b. What has been spoken by God will be performed by God.

c. We are blessed when we believe what is spoken to us by God.

The angel Gabriel had appeared to Zachariah six months earlier (Luke 1: 11-18). His response was not one of faith. "How shall I know this?" He was asking for something more substantial than God's word. Gabriel's response is given in Luke 1:19-20.

"And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." Luke 1: 19-20

3. THE IMPOSSIBLE BECOMES POSSIBLE WHEN WE ACT ON GOD'S WORD.

Luke 1:38

"Then Mary said, behold the maid servant of the Lord; "Let it be to me according to your word, and the angel departed" Luke 1 :38

a. Actions always speak louder than words.

b. If you're going to walk on water you will have to get out of the boat.

c. With God limits are removed.

When you're "with" man your life is going to have limits placed on it, but when you're "with" God limits are removed. "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1 :37)

d. We are "with" God when we hear, believe, act on his word.

You Can Trust Him

Psalm 113:1-9

Praise is a natural response of trust. The psalmist praised the God he trusted, then the psalmist reassures others you can trust Him, then gives the reasons for trusting God.

1. YOU CAN TRUST GOD BECAUSE OF HIS GLORY. 113:4-5

"The Lord is high above all the nations, His glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high. vs 4-5

- a. **The glory of God is the basis of our faith.**
- b. **The glory of God gives perspective to our faith.**
- c. **When we compare our need to God's glory faith will rise.**

"If you travel at a speed of 22,000 miles per second and travel at that speed for 70-80 years you would still be in our galaxy." John Ankerburg

- d. **God inhabits eternity, He transcended all earthly limitations. He is subject to no limits of time or space.**
- e. **God created the universe and it's laws. He can supersede them any time He wishes.**
- f. **God does set aside national laws to give aid to His people.**

For example: Peter walking on water, speaking to storms, turning water into wine, raising Lazarus from the dead, etc;

"He did not waiver at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God." Romans 4:20

2. YOU CAN TRUST GOD BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE. 113:6-8

"Who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor out of the dust and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, that He may seat him with the princes - with the princes of His people." vs 6-8

- a. **God shows His grace by stooping (humbling) to behold heaven and earth. V6**

- b. God shows His grace by seeing (beholding) the things of earth, including the poor and needy. V6**
- c. God shows his grace by lifting (raising) the poor and needy out of the dust and ashes. V7**
- d. God shows his grace by exalting and sitting the poor and needy and sitting them among the princes of His people.**

3. YOU CAN TRUST GOD BECAUSE OF HIS GOODNESS. 113:9

"He grants the barren woman a home, like a joyful mother of children." V9 Samuel 2: 110

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him." Matthew 7:11

a. God is good and does good.

b. God's goodness is not only for the bye and bye but also for the now and now.

"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living."

c. Believing to see God's goodness will keep you from fainting.

d. God has laid up of His goodness for those who fear Him and trust Him.

"Oh, how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you. Which you have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men." Psalm 31:19

e. His goodness is prepared for us beforehand.

f. God has made an everlasting covenant to never turn away from doing us good.

"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; But I will put my fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from me." Jeremiah 32:40

g. God actually rejoices to do us good.

"Yes I will rejoice over them to do them good ... " Jeremiah 32:41

CONCLUSION:

God covenants with His people through His promises. The word promise means to declare ones intentions. The believer partners with God by believing and speaking what God has said. Ezekiel 37:14

"Faith is not a trick performed with our lips, but a spoken expression that springs from the conviction of the heart. Receive the promise----don't speak in a way that dissipates it. Receive the promise don't walk in a way that denies it." **Jack Hayford**

Believing the Unseen

"While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Cor. 4: 18

There is a physical (temporal) world that is easily seen with good eyesight. There is a spiritual (eternal) world that exists alongside our temporal world though unseen with the natural eye. Spiritual eyes are required to see the eternal spiritual world. The natural man does not possess such sight.

"Jesus answered and said to him, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

When one is born again they are given spiritual eyes to see the eternal unseen realities existing parallel with the natural physical world. Jesus taught his disciples to view the kingdom of God as at hand, in the immediate vicinity. They were to announce the presence or the reality of the kingdom wherever they were. Luke 10:9 17:20-21

1. BELIEVING IN THE UNSEEN REALITIES IS FOUNDATIONAL TO FAITH.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Hebrews 11:3

Seeing the unseen realities is essential to the life of faith. Faith is the result of "spiritual sight." We must see in order to believe. Hebrews 11: 13. According to Andrew Murray, "Faith is the spiritual faculty of the soul which deals with spiritual realities of the future and the unseen." Faith sees and grasps what is not yet seen in the physical realities.

2. THE UNSEEN REALITIES OF THE KINGDOM IS A WORLD WITHOUT LIMITS.

There are not limits in the eternal spiritual world. The unseen realities of the father's world are available to fill our temporal world. The seen world is governed by laws. The unseen realities of God's kingdom can supersede these natural laws at will. As demonstrated when Jesus and Peter walked on water, feeding 15,000 people (including women and children) with a few loaves and fish.

The limitless world of the father becomes ours by faith. Matt. 17:20 All the spiritual blessings have been given to the church. They are on deposit for us in the spiritual unseen world.

"Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Ephesians 1:3

We are blessed "by" the father, "in" the Son, "through" the spirit. The Holy Spirit makes the unseen realities known and available to us. 1 Cor. 2:9-16

3. ALL THE RESOURCES OF THIS UNSEEN WORLD HAVE BEEN GIVEN BY GOD TO HIS PEOPLE THROUGH THE SON.

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with Him also freely give us all things." Romans 8:32

"Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollas or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is Gods." 1 Cor. 3:21-23

- There is an absolute abundance in the kingdom of Heaven.
- It is possible to have absolute favor with the ruler of that kingdom.
- God has called us to partner with Him in His purposes.

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." 2 Cor. 9:8

In the context of this verse are given keys to activating the abundance of the kingdom of Heaven.

- a. V9 he has dispersed abroad and given to the poor. (Giving starts the flow and keeps the flow going)**
- b. V10 the reason giving generously is possible is God gives first. Seed to the sewer (to be sown) and bread to be eaten (not given) and enjoyed.**
- c. V10 when we eat what is bread and sow what is seed, the Lord will multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of our righteousness.**
- d. The result being we are enriched in everything which equips us for all liberality .**
- e. When we obey God through liberality to others, those who receive the ministry abound in thanksgiving to God, giving Him glory for His goodness through us.**

Faith Conquers Fear

Mark 5:35-41

" Do not be afraid; only believe" Mark 5:36

The Bible says "fear has torment", fear weakens, withers, cripples, and paralyzes. That's why Jesus spoke immediately to Jairus, "Don't be afraid only believe".

Fear is the source of a lot of our personality disorders.

- a controller, manipulator- is really fearful
- excessive shyness- can be a fear of rejection
- a recluse-may fear intimacy or relationships in general
- a scrooge- may be manifesting a fear of not having
- a person unwilling to try new things- may be manifesting a fear of failure or
being ridiculed
- fear strikes all ages, genders, nationalities
- fear has torment

1. WE CONQUER FEAR WHEN WE RECOGNIZE FEAR IS A SPIRIT THAT IS NOT FROM GOD.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" 2 Timothy 1:7

a. We conclude from this verse that fear is a spirit.

A spirit may not have a body (physically), but it has a personality that seeks to create fear in others. There are "ministering" spirits and "menacing" spirits.

b. We can also conclude from this verse that God has not given us this spirit of fear.

c. Perfect love defeats fear in our lives.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment, but he who fears has not been made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18

The "perfect love" is not our perfect love for God, but God's perfect love for us. God's perfect love operating in us makes us perfect (mature, complete, well-rounded, lacking nothing) in love. God's love for us.

d. God's provision for His people is power, love, sound mind.

These three provisions is what Satan is after with his weapon of fear. Power speaks of ones ability and capability. It is power to be, do and demonstrate. Satan seeks to neutralize its effectiveness with the missile of fear. Love is the attribute of God that never fails. When we are certain of being loved we are confident and courageous, but let fear replace love and we become immobilized by fear. Soundness of mind is the result of ones focus on Christ the author and finisher of our faith. Satan steals our focus and replaces it with fear, the result is torment in the mind.

2. WE CONQUER FEAR WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THAT FAITH IS A SPIRIT THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE BELIEVER.

a. There is a spirit of faith that can be developed in the believer.

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke. We also believe and therefore speak." 2Cor. 4:13

b. The spirit of faith is according to what is written.

The more we listen to the voice (word) of God the more chance we have of developing a spirit of faith rather than a spirit of fear. Faith and fear arrive through the same gate. What we hear creates an atmosphere within us, either a spirit of faith or a spirit of fear. What we hear can either become a "stronghold" or a "strong tower". A stronghold develops when we hear and accept Satan's thoughts. A strong tower develops when we hear and accept God's word.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the council of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." Psalm 1: 1-2

c. What is written exposes and expels fear while at the same time produces faith in the believer.

"So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10: 17

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

" I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and

therefore speak." 2 Corinthians 4: 13

1.) The word went out of our Lord's mouth and must be going out of our mouth also. "He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword ... " Revelation 1: 16

2.) The believer overcomes Satan by blood, by testimony, fearlessness. "And they overcome him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." Revelation 12:11

3.) The sword of the spirit is the word of God. "And take the helmet of salvation (to protect what you hear and think) and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6: 17) The word of God "out of' our mouth is the sword of the spirit."

4.) We frame our world by the word of God as God did His. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Hebrews 11:2

"I create the fruit of the lips ... " Isaiah 57:19

The word "create" means to fashion with the same material.

3. WE CONQUER FEAR WHEN WE CONFRONT FEAR HEAD ON. (1 Samuel 17:1-58)

- a. When David came to the camp of Israel all the men were crouched in a ditch full of fear.**
- b. The giant intimidated the armies of Israel by his threats.**
- c. David confronted the giant and would not let him intimidate him.**
- d. David replied to Goliath's fear filled words with his own faith filled affirmations.**
- e. David ran toward the giant and slew him.**
- f. Fear left unchallenged will frighten.**
- g. Fear faced in the power of God will fall and fall hard.**
- h. The lesson of David and Goliath is that faith that overcomes fear is developed with other smaller challenges, like lions and bears.**

The Restoration of Job

Job 42:7-17

In the first forty-one chapters we see the devastation of Job. He lost his health, home, honor, children, wealth, wife, dignity. The bright spot in Job's suffering is it did not last long. The misconception we have is that Job's suffering lasted a lifetime. It was actually more likely only for months not years. There are two verses that bear witness to this truth.

" So I have been allotted months of futility" Job 7:3

"Oh, that I were as in months past" Job 29:2

Devastation: means to lay waste, make desolate, to ravage or destroy, to make helpless and to overwhelm. **Restoration:** according to Webster means to bring back to the original condition. However, when the Bible speaks of restoration it means: to make better, improve, increase or to multiply. In verse ten of chapter forty-two, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. This is the way God restores.

"If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep." Exodus 22:1

"If the theft be certainly found alive in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or donkey, or sheep, he shall restore double." Exodus 22:4

"Yet when he is found he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house." Proverbs 6:31

1. GOD RESTORES JOB'S HEALTH.

"After this Job lived one hundred and forty years and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days" Job 42:16-17

"For I will restore health to you and I will heal you of your wounds." Jeremiah 30:17

"Then He said to the man, Stretch out your hand. A he stretched it out; and it was restored whole, as the other." Matthew 12: 13

"Then He put his hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw every one clearly." Mark 8:25

2. GOD RESTORED JOB'S HONOR. Job 42:7-9

Two times God told Job's three friends that they were to have Job pray for them for He accepted Job. (V8, V9)

Literally- God told them that He accepted Job's face and that Job's face had been lifted up by Him, then God closed the deal with these words to the three friends: "You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." 42:8

- a. God honored Job by rebuking his friends. 42:7-8**
- b. God honored Job by accepting his face and referring to Job as "my servant" (42:8)**
- c. God honored Job when he had his friends go to Job for prayer.**
- d. God honored Job by declaring the words of his friends as foolishness. 42:8**
- e. God honored job by requiring a trespass offering from his friends.**
- f. God honored Job by warning his friends, His wrath was kindled by their behavior.**

"Beloved do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay says the Lord." Romans 12:19

3. GOD RESTORED JOB'S HOUSEHOLD.

"Then all his brothers, all his sisters and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled and comforted him for all the adversity ... He also had seven sons and three daughters." Job 42:11-13

- a. God restored Job's immediate family as well as extended family and acquaintances.**
- b. Job's family and friends consoled and comforted him.**

This is something Job apparently had not had the entire time of his ordeal.
- c. Job's family and friends were generous to Job as never before.**

4. GOD RESTORED JOB'S HOLDINGS.

"Now the Lord blessed the later end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen and one thousand female donkeys" 42:12

" indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before" (42:10)

The truth of this verse can be confirmed by comparing Job chapter one verse three.

CONCLUSION:

One day when I was studying the restoration of Job the Lord spoke to me these words:
"Why do you think I included Job's story in the Bible, it wasn't that I want you to believe me to do for you what I did for Job?"

" ... you have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord - that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful." James 5:11

Looking Unto Jesus

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ... " Heb. 12:2a

The phrase "looking unto Jesus" connotes the idea of "having eyes for no one but Jesus" (the Believer's Study Bible) Jesus is the alpha and omega of our faith. The originator and perfecter of faith. This is possible only when our focus is on Jesus. "Looking unto Jesus" requires a turning away from all others unto Him.

The word "focus" means to fix or settle on one thing, to concentrate one's attention. Focus is essential to faith because:

1. WHAT HAS YOUR FOCUS HAS YOUR FAITH.

When you lose your focus on Christ, you lose faith. Peter can testify of this truth. Matt. 14:22-32. As long as Peter was focused on Christ he walked, when he took his eyes off Christ and began to focus on the waves, he began to sink.

This is a fundamental law of faith. What has your focus has your faith. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Our focus is to be on him from start to finish. Looking away from all distractions and focusing only on Jesus. There is a spiritual A.D.D.

2. WHATEVER HAS YOUR FOCUS HAS YOUR FUTURE.

When you look at tomorrow, what do you see? Your future is shaped by your focus.

"Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in your way." PS 119:37

What we look at and how we look at things determines the outcome more often than not. 2Cof. 4:18; 1 Cor. 10:7. You will be drawn to what you set your focus on. Make sure it is worthwhile. A worthy focus is worthy of your future.

3. WHATEVER HAS YOUR FOCUS HAS YOUR FORTUNE.

The story is told about two shoe salesmen who arrived in a remote village. One wired his office and requested a plane ticket back home. His explanation was "No one here wears shoes." The other wires his home office requesting large shipments of shoes in every size and every style. His explanation "Everyone here needs shoes."

Many a good opportunity has been missed because our focus was in the wrong place. Some see obstacles, others see opportunities.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

4. WHATEVER HAS YOUR FOCUS HAS YOUR FRUITFULNESS.

Jacob knew the effects of focus in the breeding of sheep. You can read the story in Genesis chapters 30-32. When the flocks came for watering he was ready.

"And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the water troughs where the flocks came to drink, so they could conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth speckled and spotted." Gen. 30:38-39

This may be a bit difficult to prove in the lab, but it worked. Whether supernatural or natural Jacob directed their focus and the fruit was evident.

We will fail when we attempt to focus on too many things at once. Get your focus, keep your focus and fruitfulness will be the result.

"My heart is fixed, Oh God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise." PS 57:6 KJV

"O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." PS 108: 1 KJV

"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." PS 112:8 KJV

Faith Fact

Hebrews 11:13-16

The just shall live by faith. Romans 1: 17. The just shall die in faith. Our text says, "these all died in faith .." Heb. 11 :13a. Their faith out lived them. They may have died, but the things they were believing for did not die. Their faith kept working after they died. The just live and die their faith never dies.

1. FAITH HEARS AND IS NOT DEAF.

Sarah heard and believed the promise. Heb. 11: 11. Hearing is the first step in the walk of faith. Faith is a response to what has been spoken. Faith comes by hearing Romans 10:17. "Many who heard the word believed". Acts 4:4.

Faith lies dormant until it hears the promise of God and is awakened. Mark 5:21-34.

2. FAITH SEES AND IS NOT BLIND.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promise, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Heb. 11: 13

"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." Heb. 11 :27

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1

- Faith sees what others don't see.
- Faith sees in the distance before others see.
- Faith embraces the promises.
- Faith confesses the promises.

The writer of psalms prayed Lord open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things from your word. PS 119: 18. Some may need special prayer for sight like Elijah' s servant.

3. FAITH IS CONVINCED AND DOES NOT DOUBT.

Our text Heb. 11: 13 says, having seen them (the promises) afar off were assured of them.

The *KJV* says "were persuaded of them". They were assured with an inward certainty.

"And being fully convinced (persuaded *KJV*) that what He had promised He was also able to perform." Romans 4:21

Notice the progression in this verse: Promise - Persuaded - Performed. When one is "fully persuaded" (*KJV*) circumstances are not considered Rom. 4: 19. There is no wavering through unbelief. Rom. 4:20. Faith is strengthened by giving glory to God. Rom.4:20b. "As He" gave glory to God his faith was strengthened.

4. FAITH EMBRACES THE PROMISES AND DOES NOT LET THEM SLIP.

" ... having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them ... " Heb. 11:13

To embrace means to enfold in the arms, to welcome, salute, greet, to draw to ones self. To receive joyfully, to welcome to ones self. We fail to receive the promises when we are not united to them. Heb. 4:1-2. This word is illustrated for us in Acts 20:1,10.

5. FAITH SPEAKS AND IS NOT SILENT.

"And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, I believed and therefore I spoke, we also believe and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4:13

Hebrews 11:3 indicates that God framed his world with his word. We also frame our world with our words. God actually creates with our words.

"I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace, to him who is far off and to him who is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him." Isa. 57: 19

The word create in this verse means to fashion with the same material - Amplified says "I create the fruit of his lips" - according to the Gesenius Hebrew - Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, the word "create" means to make, to fashion, of the same stock - to beget, to form.

6. FAITH IS PERSISTENT AND WILL NOT QUIT.

The early pilgrims were persistent and endured great difficulty. They would have had ample opportunity to quit and return to their old world, but did not. They continued on. Hebrews 11: 13-16. We are to follow their example.

"And we desire that each of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. 6:11-12

Kenneth Copeland calls "faith and patience" the twin towers of the believer's faith life.

"Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise." Heb. 10:35-36-36.

7. FAITH IS ALIVE AND WILL NOT DIE.

You and I will die, but our faith will go on working even after we are deceased. The one thing that keeps faith alive is works, actions and acts of faith.

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:17

Faith compels to action. Faith is manifested by works James 2:18-20. By works faith is made perfect. Revive your faith. Raise your faith from the dead. Do something!

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James 2:26

The spirit leaving the body is when death is pronounced. When faith is separated from works, it is declared a dead faith. Let faith come alive.

The Generosity of God

Matthew 7:7-12

Generosity is defined as a willingness to give. Big hearted, great hearted, large hearted, magnanimous, lavish, liberal, unsparing, open hearted and open handed.

Psalm 104:24-28

1. THE HUMAN BEING IS CAPABLE OF TREMENDOUS ACTS OF GENEROSITY. 7:11

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts ... " Matt. 7:11a

I read a story of a waitress who received 2.4 million dollars from a patron in the restaurant where she worked. She went on to build a building and open her own restaurant.

A young boy asked if he would give his blood for his sister's transfusion, that she may live. During the procedure the sister responded immediately. When the young boy saw his sister's progress he asked "Will I die now?" The little boy wasn't aware that his blood was being returned to him. He gave that generously.

I heard of two strangers who met on a pier, total strangers, a friendship developed and it was told that one friend needed a kidney transplant, the new friend happened to match and gave his kidney to his new friend.

The human being has tremendous capacity for unselfish generosity.

2. THE HEAVENLY FATHER HAS AN EVEN GREATER CAPACITY FOR GENEROSITY.7:11

"If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him." Matthew 7:11

a. The contrast of human beings and the heavenly Father serves as an incentive to faith.

b. The contrast serves as an antidote to fear.

"Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32

"So don't be afraid, little flock, for it gives your Father great happiness to give you the kingdom." Luke 12:32 Living Bible

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

d. There is no barrier remaining to God's generosity.

"He who did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things."

- 1.) He did not spare- "His son".
- 2.) He delivered up his son- "for us all".
- 3.) With Him He freely gave us all things.
- 4.) God did not withhold his best, how would He withhold the rest.

"Therefore let no one boast in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death or things present or things to come - all are yours; and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:21-22

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

e. We should not place our faith in uncertain riches but in the certainty of divine love.

3. BECAUSE OF GOD'S GENEROSITY AND PREDISPOSITION TO GIVE; HIS CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO ASK FREELY.

"Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and who seeks finds, to him who knocks it will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

a. Our asking gives God occasion for giving.

b. We are encouraged to ask freely.

c. Everyone who asks receives, is the promise of the generosity of God.

d. Our capacity to ask will not exhaust God's capacity to give.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think." Eph.3:20

- 1.) God is able to do all we ask.
- 2.) God is able to do above all we ask.
- 3.) God is able to do abundantly above all we ask.
- 4.) God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask.

e. Thinking and asking is what activates God's mighty power in us.

"According to the power that works in us" Eph 3 :20

f. When God activates His mighty power in us He is able to work through us to bring glory to Himself.

4. THE SOUL THAT RECEIVES GENEROSITY OVERFLOWS WITH GENEROSITY TO OTHERS.

"Or what man is there among you who, if his son ask for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent." Matthew 7:9-10

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7: 12

" freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 10:8b

a. No one is ever satisfied with getting.

b. We are only satisfied when getting overflows with giving.

c. The purpose of God's generosity is that it may overflow to others.

"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; that in a great time of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality." 2 Corinthians 8:1-2

"While you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11

Breaking Out of Poverty

Psalm 104: 24-35

Poverty has more to do with the fear of not having enough rather than actually not having enough. I read the story of a very wealthy woman who ate cold oatmeal because she did not want to use electricity and there was no heat in her home. Her son died because she would not get him medical help, yet she had hundreds of thousands of dollars in her checking account.

"This spirit of fear affects the entire human race that even a person who has plenty still tends to think it will never be enough." **Jack Hayford**

The spirit of poverty is a "stronghold" that must be pulled down. The stronghold is the result of reasoning against the knowledge of God. This wrong reasoning exalts itself against the true knowledge of God. The weapon of God's word is powerful against such strongholds in our lives. The word will bring our thinking into alignment enabling us to live in the flow of obedient lives.

Curse and poverty are synonymous. They both result in diminished capacity. A binding so as to remedy powerless. They both involve a great deal more than money. Poverty affects our emotion, our spirit, how we live our lives.

1. WE WILL BREAK OUT OF POVERTY WHEN WE SEE GOD AS A GIVER AND NOT A TAKER. (104:27-28)

"These all wait for You, that you may give them their food in due season. What you give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good."
vs 27-28

Most problems we face as believers stem from a wrong concept of God. We can rise no higher in God than our thoughts of God. Our thoughts of God are our ceiling of expectation. Change the wrong way you think about God and you will be able to receive more readily from God.

a. The psalmist saw God as a giver. vs 27-28

"That you may give them their food in due season." v27

"What you give them they gather in." v28

b. The psalmist saw God as generous.

"You open your hand they are filled" v28

c. The psalmist saw God as good.

"You open your hand they are filled with good." v28

"You are good and do good; teach me your statutes." Psalm 119:68

"The earth is filled with the goodness of the Lord." Psalm 33:5

d. The psalmist saw God's generosity and goodness and declared His glory. 104:31

"May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in His works." v31

2. WE WILL BREAK OUT OF POVERTY WHEN WE BECOME A GATHERER AND NOT A GRABBER. 104:28

"What You give them they gather in; You open your hand they are filled with good."

"We are born crying, with our arms outstretched and fingers clutching, grasping for something. Even though we don't know what it is- although our minds and bodies are developed, tears and tantrums are mostly under control. Only a work of grace can remove our need for getting and keeping for ourselves. The fear I am not going to get mine makes me unable to rejoice when other get theirs." **Jack Hayford**

a. The hand is an extension of ones personality.

b. The psalmist portrays God's hand as open and extended in generosity.

c. What we receive from God's hand satisfies us full.

"You open your hand, they are filled with good." v28

d. Because God's generosity satisfied us full we become gatherers rather than grabbers.

Webster defines "grab" as: to seize or snatch suddenly, to take roughly and quickly, to get possession of by unscrupulous methods.

"Therefore do not worry, saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For after all the things the gentiles seek for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:31-33

"Now Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Timothy 6:6

3. WE WILL BREAK OUT OF POVERTY WHEN GRASPING GIVES WAY TO GRATITUDE. Psalm 104:24

"O Lord, how manifold are Your works: In wisdom You have made them all The earth is full of your possessions." 104:24

A father went with his son to McDonald's. While they were eating the father reached over to get a couple of fries from his son. He reacted "Those are my fries, stay out of them." The father was hurt by this experience with his son and vowed never to do to God what his son had done to him.

Gratitude, a feeling of thankful appreciation for favors or benefits received. Webster

The son had failed to understand:

- the source of the fries
- the father had the power to take the fries
- the father could have buried the son in fries
- the father did not need the fries
- the father was hurt by the son's attitude toward him and the fries

a. The attitude of gratitude is important.

b. Gratitude reminds us who is our source.

c. Gratitude honors God.

d. Gratitude keeps things in perspective.

4. WE WILL BREAK OUT OF POVERTY WHEN GRASPING IS REPLACED WITH GENEROSITY.

a. When is a thief no longer a thief?

"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have to give him who has need." Eph. 5:28

Answer: when he works that he may have to give to those in need. Only then he is no longer a thief.

b. When is a grabber no longer a grabber?

"While you are enriched in every thing for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11

Answer: when one sees wealth as opportunity for liberality which results in thanksgiving to God.

c. When is the rich truly rich?

"Command those who are rich in their present age not to be haughty, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good that they may be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share." 1 Timothy 6:17-18

Answer: when they are ready to give, willing to share.

As Much As They Wanted

John 6:1-14

"... and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted" (v11)

This miracle is the only miracle included in all four gospels - it is classified as a "sign" (v14). A sign is to provoke faith in the person performing the sign. John included seven "signs" in his gospel. "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31

1. JESUS SAW THE NEED. 6:5-6

"Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Phillip, where shall we buy bread, that these may eat. But this He said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do." vs5-6

a. Jesus saw the need beforehand.

"And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-will-provide; as it is said to this day, "in the mount of the Lord, it shall be provided." Genesis 22:14

Jehovah-Jireh- the Lord will provide is a play on the verb translated "provide". The verb means basically "see" as the English word "provide" is from the Latin, meaning "see beforehand" God sees our need before it arises and makes provision for it."

The Believers Study Bible

b. Jesus knew what He would do beforehand.

"But this He said to test him for He Himself knew what He would do" John 6:6

"Therefore do not be like them, for your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him." Matthew 6:8

c. God knows all things about all people, at all times, in all places.

d. God's knowledge is a great source of encouragement to everyone in need.

e. When God sees a need compassion compels His involvement.

"And Jesus, when He come out, saw a great multitude and was moved with

compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things." Mark 6:34

f. No need can exceed God's ability to meet it.

There was approximately 15,000 people on the hillside that day, counting women and children the population was swelled because the Passover was drawing near. An impossible situation, but Christ knew what He was going to do.

2. JESUS NEEDED A SEED. 6:9

"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" V9

"For there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have." 2 Corinthians 8: 12

a. God supplies the seed.

"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness." (2 Corinthians 9:10)

b. God multiplies the seed.

- 1.) When we operate God's way, it increases the fruits of righteousness in our life.
- 2.) When we give what God has given, the result is thanksgiving to God through us.
- 3.) The purpose for receiving is giving.

"While you are enriched in everything for all liberality." 2 Corinthians 9:11

3. JESUS AND THE SEED EXCEED THE NEED. 6: 11-13

"... and likewise of the fish as much as they wanted" v11

"So when they were filled ... " v 12a

"Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten." v13

a. Jesus and the seed exceeded the need by twelve baskets full.

This was not waste, these were eatable leftovers that no one could eat because they were so full.

b. The limit was set by the appetite of the participants. "As much as they wanted"

Jesus kept breaking and the disciples kept serving as long as anyone wanted more.

c. We can limit God's willingness to provide by our preconceived ideas about Him and His willingness to give extravagantly.

The limit was not predetermined by Christ or the disciples. They never said "one fish and one piece of bread for each person", that would have been miracle enough. No the only limit was:

- as much as they wanted
- until they were filled
- still 12 baskets remained

d. The young lad provided the seed and he certainly deserved some if not all that was left over.

CONCLUSION:

There are great lessons here for the church:

- God often asks us to do what is beyond our ability to do.
- God will provide for everything He asks us to do.
- Rather than be overwhelmed by the task we can rejoice in the fact that God sees the need beforehand and has provided for it beforehand.
- Our seed can release tremendous supernatural provision.
- There will be enough left over to seed for the next project.

The Seven Pillars of Stewardship

"Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars." Proverbs 9:1
Stewardship can be defined as managing God given resources, with God given wisdom to accomplish God given goals for God's glory.

1. THE FIRST PILLAR OF STEWARDSHIP IS "GOD IS THE OWNER OF EVERYTHING."

"Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is yours." 1 Chronicles 29:11

a. All stewardship must begin here or be faulty.

"The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters." Psalm 24:1-2

b. Everything in creation owes its existence to God. He has created it and sustains it.

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Hebrews 11:3

"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him." Colossians 1: 16

" upholding all things by the word of His power..." Hebrews 1:3

2. THE SECOND PILLAR OF STEWARDSHIP IS "EVERYTHING WE POSSESS COMES FROM GOD."

"Both riches and honor comes from You, and you reign over all. In your hand is power and might; In your hand is to make great and to give strength to all. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You; And of your own we have given you- O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own." 1 Chronicles 29:12, 14,16

a. Both riches and honor come from God.

b. Strength to acquire what we have acquired comes from God.

c. When we give, we give back to God what we have received from Him.

d. Humility and gratitude is the attitude of those who have received so much.

"Command those who are rich in the 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."

2 Timothy 6: 17

3. THE THIRD PILLAR OF STEWARDSHIP IS "WE ARE STEWARDS AND NOT OWNERS OF WHAT WE POSSESS." Luke 12:42-48

"And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when He comes." Luke 12:42-43

a. A steward manages another's estate.

b. Stewardship involves privilege, responsibility and accountability.

c. A good steward is both faithful and wise.

d. Those who are faithful are promoted and given greater opportunity.

e. Blessed is the servant who is found doing when the master of the house returns.

4. THE FOURTH PILLAR OF STEWARDSHIP IS "AS STEWARDS WE ARE TO BE FAITHFUL AND FRUITFUL."

"Success is bearing as much fruit as possible, giving your gifts, opportunities and potential." Rich Warren

"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1: 10

"Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it." Matthew 21:43

a. Faithfulness is no substitute for fruitfulness.

"By this my Father is glorified that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciple." John 15:8

b. There are four different levels of fruitfulness in John 15:1-8:

- no fruit
- fruit
- more fruit
- much fruit

c. The believer has been appointed to fruitfulness.

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain " John 15:16

5. THE FIFTH PILLAR OF STEW ARDSIDP IS "GOD'S WEALTH IS ACCESSIBLE TO HIS CHILDREN."

"He who did not spare His own son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." Romans 8:32

"Therefore, let no one boast in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come all are yours and you are Christ's and Christ is God's." 1 Corinthians 3:21-23

" .. if children, then heirs- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ ... " Romans 8:17

6. THE SIXTH PILLAR OF STEW ARDSIDP IS "GOD WANTS IDS WEALTH IN CIRCULATION."

"There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun; riches kept for their owner to his hurt." Ecclesiastes 5: 13

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty." Proverbs 11 :24

"He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses." Proverbs 28:27

"Command those who are rich in this present age .. Jet them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share." 1 Timothy 6:17-18

The world's attitude is:

"Get all you can, can all you get, sit on the lid"

Three attitudes about money Luke 10:25-37:

- what is yours is mine and I am going to take it. (Thief)
- what is mine is mine and I'm going to keep it. (Legalist)
- what is mine is yours and I am going to give it. (The Giver) John Maxwell

7. THE SEVENTH PILLAR OF STEWARDSHIP IS "GOD WILL ENTRUST TO US AS MUCH WEALTH AS WE WILL INVEST FOR HIS GLORY."

"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." Ephesians 4:28

a. Giving is the end of labor not getting.

b. Our giving causes thanksgiving to God.

"While you were enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." 2 Corinthians 9:11

c. God supplies for our needs as well as our seeds.

"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness." 2 Corinthians 9:10

d. We are to eat our bread & sow our seed.

e. When we sow the seed supplied it is multiplied for a greater capacity to sow.

Giving Away the Kingdom

Luke 10:1-9

The sending of the seventy or more accurately seventy-two. It is thought by many scholars that each of the twelve apostles were assigned six apprentices, making seventy-two.

These nameless and faceless disciples were sent to announce and administer the kingdom of heaven, wherever they went. "Freely ye have received freely give."

There is a kingdom pattern here for ministering the kingdom to others, this pattern is very much relevant for the church in the 21-sty century.

1. WE GIVE AWAY THE KINGDOM WHEN WE BLESS OTHERS. 10:5

"But whatever house you enter, first say, peace to this house"

a. "Peace" refers to God's blessing on the house.

b. To bless is to extend or confer the blessing of the kingdom to others.

" and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Acts 3:25

c. We confer the blessing of the kingdom on others by words, touch, deeds.

d. When we pronounce the blessing, we declare the curse is broken and the blessing is established in Jesus Christ.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree) that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3: 13-14

e. The instructions to the church is bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 3:9, James 3:9-11

f. The believer must see themselves extending the blessing of the kingdom.

g. When we criticize we neutralize the blessing and re-enforce the curse.

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may import grace to the hearers." Ephesians 4:29

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another even as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:31-32

2. WE GIVE AWAY THE KINGDOM WHEN WE BUILD RELATIONSHIPS. 10:7

"And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house." v7

- a. Long term relations exercise greater influence than short term.**
- b. Relationships are enhanced when we accept and join in to other cultures.**
- c. Relationships are built on giving and receiving, so we must learn to receive as well as give.**
- d. We must settle for surface influence when we move from house to house.**

3. WE GIVE AWAY THE KINGDOM WHEN WE BRING THE POWER OF GOD TO BEAR ON OTHERS NEEDS. 10:9

"And heal the sick there " V9

- a. People are never more receptive than when you have a solution to their needs and personal dilemmas.**
- b. When you meet peoples immediate need they will be more receptive to their eternal needs.**
- c. Compassion goes a long way in creating receptivity to the gospel.**

4. WE GIVE AWAY THE KINGDOM WHEN WE BOLDLY DECLARE THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM. 10:9

" and say to them the kingdom of God has come near you" v9

- a. The kingdom of God is not a distant reality, but a present reality.**
- b. The kingdom of God is within everyone's reach.**
- c. The spiritual world is a paralleled world to the natural world.**

"For in Him we live and move and have our being ... " Acts 17:28

"What does the divine immanence mean in the Christian experience? It means simply that God is here, wherever we are, God is here. There is no place, there can be no place where He is not--God is here. No point is nearer to God than any other points."

A.W. Tozer

d. The unseen realities of the kingdom are available from God through His children.

"..... the kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, See here! or See there! For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20-21)

e. We release the resources of the kingdom through faith, faith words, faith touches, faith actions.

The church is to boldly announce the kingdom and all of its king's resources are available to all who are in need.

Freely ye have received, freely give!

Ten Truths About Tithing

Malachi 3:10-11

1. THE TITHE IS A PRECEPT - "BRING."

a. A moral imperative for all those who wish to honor God.

"Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase " Proverbs 3:9

b. A moral imperative for all who wish to enjoy God's blessing.

"So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." Proverbs 3: 1 0

c. A moral imperative for those who wish to avoid robbing God.

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! But you say, in what way have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed me even this whole nation." Malachi 3:8-9

d. A moral imperative for those who wish to worship God in spirit and truth.

Malachi 2:7-14

2. THE TITHE IS PERSONAL - "YOU".

a. The tithe is a personal choice each of us must make to honor God and give Him first place.

b. The tithe is a personal commitment to covenant relationship with God.

1.) Abraham commenced it. Gen 14:18-24

" ... and he gave Him a tithe of all" Gen 14:20

2.) Jacob committed to it. Gen 28:10-22

" ... and all that you give me I will someday give a tenth to you"
Gen 28:22

- 3.) Moses commanded it. Deut. 12:6, Lev. 27:30
- 4.) Christ commended it. Luke 11 :42, Matthew 23:23
- 5.) The church continues it. 1 Corinthians 16:2

3. THE TITHE IS NEVER PARTIAL-" ALL".

The word "all" means the full amount- one tenth of your income.

"And all the tithe of the Lord, whether of the seed of the Lord or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lords. It is holy to the Lord" Leviticus 27:32

"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year." Deuteronomy 14:22

4. THE TITHE IS A PERCENTAGE-"TITHE".

a. The word "tithe" means a "tenth" whether in Hebrew or Greek.

b. We can verify this by comparing two verses of scripture.

" ... and he (Abraham) gave him (Melchizedek) a tithe of all." Genesis 14:20

Now consider how great this man (Melchizedek) was to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils." Hebrews 7:4

In Genesis the word "tithe" is used in Hebrew the word "tenth" is used.

c. The tithe or tenth is a specific amount to be given.

d. The tithe or tenth establishes an equality. Everyone gives the same when they give a tenth.

5. THE TITHE HAS A PLACE-"THE STOREHOUSE".

a. The storehouse is God's house.

"Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house" Malachi 3: 1 0

b. The storehouse is where God's people are fed.

c. The storehouse is where you and your family worship the Lord.

d. Without the financial support of it's members the church will not be able to minister adequately.

6. THE TITHE IS FOR PROVISION. "FOOD IN MY HOUSE."

a. The tithes and offerings are God's ordained way to provide for the ministry of His house.

b. From 60-80 percent of the success of any organization is attributed to three factors:

- Having clear direction
- Having the right team players
- Having sound finances **Bob Biehl, Leadership Confidence**

c. When we give priority to God's house, He gives priority to our house.

d. It takes money to fulfill the churches mission.

7. THE TITHE IS TO BE PROVEN-"TRY ME HEREWITH."

a. This is the only time in the Bible we are told to put God to the test.

b. God will be proven faithful when tested.

c. God wants to prove Himself to us and challenge us to afford Him the opportunity.

d. When we tithe we are affording God opportunity to prove Himself faithful.

8. THE TITHE HAS A PROMISE-"I WILL."

a. I will open the windows of Heaven. v10

b. I will rebuke the devourer. v11

c. You will be a delightful land. v12

9. THE TITHE IS PRESENT -"TRY ME NOW."

a. Now-at this very moment. In the period of time.

b. If you have been doing it in the past do it now.

c. You will find me faithful now! Try me now! Do not put off. Don't hesitate or procrastinate. Do it now.

d. There is no time like the present.

10. THE TITHE RESULTS IN PROSPERITY-"POUR OUT."

"... if! will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." v10

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field." v11

a. I will pour you out a blessing.

According to theological word studies of the New Testament the word "blessing" means to endow with power for success, fruitfulness, longevity and prosperity, to be given everything required for an abundant life.

b. Rebuke the devourer.

A devourer is someone who consumes, eats up completely, there is nothing left. To rebuke means to call off, to call down, to still, to render inactive, to leave alone.

c. Restore your place.

"And all nations shall call you blessed, for you will be a delightful Land"

CONCLUSION:

God has a threefold basis for demanding stewardship. (Isaiah 43:1) He created us, formed us, He redeemed us.

"No man has a right to expect blessing from God if he, through greed and coveted ness blocks the pathway down which God's blessings march." Author Unknown

Abraham's Blessing

Genesis 12:1-4 Genesis 24:1-35

Abraham is a prototype of the believer. He serves as a model, an example. According to Galatians 3:13-14 all believers are to be partakers of Abraham's blessing.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed in everyone who hangs on a tree) that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

1. ABRAHAM'S BLESSING PROMISED SIGNIFICANCE.

"Now the Lord had said to Abraham; Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land I will show you. I will make you a great nation

" Genesis 12:1-2

" ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" Genesis 12:3

- a. The call to significance is a call to pursue God's purpose for one's life.**
- b. The call to significance requires a separation from distractions.**
- c. The distractions to significance are often very close to us.**
- d. The price of significance makes the prize that much greater.**
- e. The call to significance is often revealed in small portions.**
- f. The call to significance is a call to a life of faith.**

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." Hebrews 11 :8

g. When you're called to significance you live on promises not explanations.

h. Any hesitancy to the call will hinder our finding significance.

- i. Our significance is wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is the promised seed of Abraham.**
- j. As Christ seed significance comes in blessing all the families of the earth, not merely being blessed, but blessing.**

2. ABRAHAM'S BLESSING PROMISED SUCCESS.

"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you ... " Genesis 12:2

Success can be defined as fulfilling the creator's intentions, to reach one's full potential, to become all one has been designed to become.

a. Part of the blessing is the removal of the curse.

The curse means to live in a diminished capacity, not the full potential designed by God.

b. The curse of diminished capacity has been removed in Christ.

"Giving" thanks to the Father who qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love ... In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1: 12-14

c. The blessing of Abraham which includes success comes upon us in Christ.

"That blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus ... " Galatians 3: 14

d. The blessing of Christ endows with power for success, prosperity, fruitfulness and longevity. A rich and abundant life. Genesis 24:1-35

"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things." 24:1

"The Lord has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants and camels and donkeys." 24:35

3. ABRAHAM'S BLESSING PROMISED SAFETY.

" I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you ... " Genesis 12:3

- a. Those who extend favor and blessing to Abraham will receive favor and blessing from God.**
- b. Those who curse, seek to diminish Abraham's blessing, God will diminish their own potential.**
- c. God's promise of safety to Abraham was kept even in times of weakness and inconsistency. Gen 12:10-20, 14:1-17, 16:1-16,20:1-18**

4. ABRAHAM'S BLESSING PROMISED SUCCESSION.

"I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curse you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3

- a. There would be a series of heirs, one after another.**
- b. Abraham becomes the father of nations.**
- c. Through Abraham's seed "Christ" every family on earth has been blessed.**
- d. Through Abraham's seed "the church" every family on earth continues to be blessed.**
- e. Every believer is in the succession of Abraham's seed-Christ.**
- f. Those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Galatians 3:9**

CONCLUSION:

As Abraham obeyed let the church of the 21st century obey the call to go out in search of significance, success, safety and a successors. We will not be disappointed.

The Lord Has Need Of It

Luke 19:28-40

"The Lord has need of it" this is a phenomenal statement considering it is made by the creator God. "The earth is the Lord's and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it" (PS 24: 1) Why does the creator of all things have need of it? The answer is found at least partially in Matthew 25: 14. The kingdom of God is like a householder, who left his goods in the hands of his servants and departed. Jesus has not earthly assets, though he owned everything. Everything He owned had been placed in the hands of His servants. He depends on the cooperation of His servants who hold His assets.

Christ was born in a borrowed stable, died on a borrowed cross, buried in a borrowed tomb. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

2 Corinthians 8: 9

1. THE LORD HAD NEED OF IT, SO HE SENT FOR IT. 19:29-32

"Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat, loose it and bring it here. And if anyone ask you, why are you loosing it? Then you shall say to him, because the Lord has need of it." vs30-31

- a. The Lord exercises ownership in sending for it.**
- b. The Lord knows where His assets are.**
- c. The Lord knows in whose hands He has entrusted His assets.**
- d. He will send for those assets when needed.**
- e. The response to the Lord's request for assets in hold should be positive.**
- f. The significance of the assets held are freely seen. This request would fulfill Israel's long awaited prophecy of Messiah.**

"Rejoice greatly, Oh daughters of Zion! Shout, Oh daughters of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey." Zechariah 9:9

2. THE LORD HAD NEED OF IT, SO THE OWNERS SENT IT. 19:32-35

"But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "why are you loosing the colt?", and they said, "the Lord has need of him" then they brought him to Jesus." V33-35

- a. There was no further explanation asked for or given.**
- b. "The Lord has need of it", sufficed them all.**
- c. The Lord acknowledged their legal ownership of the animal. He simply requested it's use.**
- d. Their legal ownership would have given them the right of refusal.**
- e. Their legal ownership also afforded them the right to release it, and they did.**
- f. There are positive results when we respond positively to Christ's request.**

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself." Proverbs 11 :24-25

"The poorest man I know is the one who only has money" **J.D. Rockefeller**

3. THE LORD HAD NEED OF IT, SO HE SAT UPON IT. 19:35-40

"Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they sat Jesus on him"

- a. We often are not aware of the significance of the Lord's request.**
- b. When the owners sent the colt they likely had no idea of it's significance.**
- c. The owners lived the rest of their lives and beyond in scripture, because of their willingness to respond to the Lord's request.**
- d. We should never underestimate the significance of what we give to the work of God.**

" ... So He said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God." Acts 10:4

"For in pouring their fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her." Matthew 26:12-13

**e. While others may criticize you for your extravagant love, we will continue to give.
Matthew 26:7-9**

Power to Get Wealth

"And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day." Deuteronomy 8:18

Deuteronomy is a series of three messages given by Moses to the children of Israel as they prepared to enter the promised land. In Deuteronomy 6 he begins his message with the theme "Don't forget". In Deuteronomy 26 Moses institutes into the worship of Israel a means of remembering.

1. WE ARE TO REMEMBER, IT IS GOD WHO HAS GIVEN THE POWER TO GET WEALTH.

Verse eighteen has a great deal to say about God - His person, His purpose and plans on the earth. See Deu. 7:6-9, 12-15.

"The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it."
Proverbs 10:22

"As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor - this is the gift of God." Ecc. 5: 19

"You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water; but you brought us out to rich fulfillment." PS 66:12

The KJV says " ... but you brought us out to a wealthy place." Strong's #7310 translated "wealth" satisfaction - running over wealthy.

"God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into property; but the rebellious dwell in a dry land." PS 68:6

2. WE ARE TO REMEMBER THE PURPOSE FOR WEALTH.

Our text Deu. 8: 18, says the purpose for God giving the power to get wealth is: "that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

Satan gives power to get wealth to establish his "corruption" in the earth. God gives power to get wealth to establish His "covenant" of goodness in the earth. God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 - "I will bless you ... and you shall be a

blessing ... in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

3. WE ARE TO REMEMBER THAT GOD GIVES POWER TO GET WEALTH BY INCLUDING MONEY IN OUR WORSHIP.

We remember, that God gives power to get wealth by including money in our worship. The entire 26th chapter of Deuteronomy deals with tithing as a statute of God in Israel's worship. This way they nor we will forget the purpose for wealth.

To forget the source and purpose of wealth by failing to honor God with tithes and offerings has consequences. The windows of Heaven (the source) are closed tight. The blessing is withheld - establishes the curse and the enemy is released to "devour". The great destiny of the nations is missed. Obedience will reverse all of the above. "All the nations will call you blessed ... " (Malachi 3:12a) Why? Because the covenant of blessing extends to all the families of the earth. God's covenant purpose is established in the earth.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us "(for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree)" that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galatians 3:13-14

The curse has been removed from those who have received Christ as savior and lord. The cord of redemption is a three-fold cord. Salvation for the soul, healing for the body, deliverance from poverty and any and all oppression of the enemy. (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4: 18-19) The mission of the church is to bless the nations by bringing them back to Christ and his covenant of goodness in Christ. Jeremiah 32:36-42

This mission enterprise requires great wealth. Resources to carry out the mission of God. 2 Corinthians 9:8

The Importance of Money

Money is important. Jesus talked a great deal about money - 16 of 38 parables were concerned with the handling of money and possessions. In the gospels, out of 10 verses deal directly with money. The Bible offers less than 500 verses on faith. There are 500 verses in the Bible dealing with prayer. But, more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

According to author Howard Hendricks, "Jesus Christ said more about money than about Heaven or hell." Money is important.

1. MONEY REVEALS OUR CONCEPT OF GOD.

Most problems Christians struggle with can be traced to a faulty view of God. This is nowhere more evident than when dealing with the subject of money.

Our attitudes towards money is often symptomatic of our thoughts and concepts of God. "Strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6) surface in the life of believers over money more often than most any other issue. This would explain why so much of scripture is devoted to the subject.

2. MONEY MANIFESTS CHARACTER.

This is why Christ makes such radical claims on our checkbooks.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matt. 6:21

More fractures in character have occurred because of money than most any other temptation.

"One's values are determined by what one values." Unknown

3. MONEY REVEALS THE LEVEL OF ONE'S COMMITMENT.

People support what they are committed to. The average giving of Christians in America is approximately 2% of their income. This is far short of 10% called for in scripture.

4. MONEY AFFORDS US CHOICES.

The more resources we have the more options we have. People who are strapped and in debt have few if any options. "The borrower is servant to the lender." (Prov.22:7)

"Owe no man anything except love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." Romans 13:8

Love in practical tangible ways is nearly impossible for those struggling financially.

5. MONEY PRESENTS CHALLENGES.

"When your out-go exceeds your income, your up keep will be your down fall."

The challenges of a "financial" nature confront us all from time to time. How we handle this struggle goes a long way in determining our future happiness.

6. MONEY CAN GENDER CAPTIVITY.

Captivity literally and symbolically. Money is a hard taskmaster. We are captives to money when we love it more than we love God.

7. MONEY CREATES CRIMINALS.

There are more crimes committed for money than any other crime. More prison time is being spent because of crimes to get money than anything else. Good people become criminals over money.

8. MONEY GIVES CONTROL.

The golden rule: He who has the money rules. This is nowhere more evident than in the life of the church. Make sure whoever controls the money has the character to do so. Some will take control of the money as if it were their own. That statement sounds commendable on the surface, but may reveal a "control" issue.

9. MONEY CAUSES CONFLICT.

"90 percent of divorced couples point to financial difficulties as a contributing factor." **Larry Burkett**

There is so much emotion generated by money than reason usually goes unmentioned.

10. MONEY CAN BECOME THE FOCUS OF SATANIC ATTACK.

There is no pressure like money pressure and Satan loves to keep people under pressure especially the church.

Judges 6:3-10 "So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amelekites and the people of the East would come up against them. Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord because of the Midianites, that the lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptian and out of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. Also I said to you, "I am the Lord your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.'"

11. MONEY FOSTERS CONFIDENCE IN MANY AREAS.

When the money is there morale is up. When the money is there momentum is up. When the money is there motivation is up. When the money is there mandate is up. John Maxwell

12. MONEY CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY ORGANIZATION.

"From 60-80 percent of the success of any organization is attributable to three factors:
Having clear direction
Having the right team players
Having sound finances. **Bob Biehl, Leadership Confidence**

"When I was young, I used to think money was the most important thing; now that I am older, I know it is." **Oscar Wilde**

Money Talks

Ralph Cramden, after he had found a million dollars on his bus commented "money talks." It certainly does.

1. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY.

Compare the two stores of Barnabas in Acts 4:34-37 and that of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5: 1-10 to see what money may be saying about you.

2. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT YOUR CHURCH CORPORATELY.

Churches have reputations just like individuals. 2 Corinthians 8: 1- 3, 9: 1- 3; 1 Thessalonians 1 :5-8. Most churches have all the money they need for what they are doing.

3. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT GOD SPECIFICALLY.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." PS 23: 1

This and other verses speaks volumes about the nature of God's care for His people. Christ once asked His disciples "lacked ye anything?" The apostle Paul declared "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19

1 Chronicles 29: 11 "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head over all."

4. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT LEADERSHIP GENERALLY.

Leadership is responsible for the cash flow of the church. How well we lead in this area speaks volumes concerning our leadership. Failure here spells disaster elsewhere. The area of finances is the first place to establish leadership.

5. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT VISION DIRECTLY.

"More failure in the church comes about because of ambiguity of purpose than for any other reason." Howard Hendricks, Dallas Seminary

6. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT THE FUTURE.

"Growing churches believe that their best days are ahead of them ... declining churches believe their best days are behind them." Kennon Callahan, 12 Keys to an Effective Church

7. WHAT MONEY SAYS ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE DIRECTLY.

Stewardship is more about attitude than assets. Luke 10:25-37

- What's yours is mine and I am going to take it - Thief
- What is mine is mine and I'm going to keep it - Legalist
- What is mine is yours and I'm going to get it - Giver (Samaritan) John Maxwell, Stewardship Series

Living Under an Open Heaven

Malachi 3:6-12

The Lord wants His people to have "money power" not "money problems". Many of God's people are like David's army in I Samuel 22:2.

"And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him."

Can you imagine leading a congregation of approximately 400 and every one of your members was distressed, everyone in debt and everyone was discontented. (Lit: bitter of soul). Sounds like a fun place to be!

According to the third chapter of Malachi, this is not what God desires for His people. There are four things God wishes to do for His people. He wants to open heaven over us. When He does four things will occur:

1. HE WILL REVERSE THE CURSE.

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation."
Malachi 3:9

To be "cursed" is to live in a diminished capacity. Not according to ones original design and intent. Rather than overcoming one is overcome. To live in reduced circumstances, the withdrawal of the blessing. A curse binds or limits it's object bringing diminished capacity - reduced circumstances Haggai 1 :6, 9-11, 2: 16.

The curse is the result of disobedience. Obedience establishes the blessing. This can happen to an individual, family, a people, group or an entire nation.

The curse is reversed and the blessing established through faith and obedience. To be blessed is to be endued with power for success, prosperity, longevity, fruitfulness, to enjoy a rich and abundant life. This is God's desire for His people. He wants the windows of Heaven opened over you. Numbers 6:22-27

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree) That the blessings of Abraham might come upon the gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3: 13 -14

Christ has redeemed us from the curse - let us not place ourselves back under the curse by our disobedience.

2. HE WILL RE-OPEN THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN.

"... if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10b

The windows had been opened but closed through disobedience. God promises to reopen the windows of Heaven. The choice gets easier when you consider:

"For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm my covenant with you." Lev. 26:9

"I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze." Lev. 26:19

This promise is extremely personal. "I will open for you the windows of Heaven and pour you such a blessing". The promise is personal because the response is personal.

3. HE WILL REBUKE THE DEVOURER FOR YOUR SAKES.

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes ... " Malachi 3:11a

A "devourer" is one who consumes entirely and leaves nothing. See Judges 6:1-10. Israel was "greatly impoverished by their enemies devouring their fields."

To "rebuke" the devourer means to call off, call down, to still or to render inactive, to leave alone. God will see to it that there is something left and left in abundance.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

God says "I will forbid the devourer from devouring your blessing. This is a great way to "recession proof" your home. A recession means to go backwards, a financial fall off. Your faith and obedience will "recession proof" your home.

4. HE WILL POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING WITHOUT MEASURE.

The blessing is started and continued by faith and obedience. The covenant of blessing is being extended to us. God has restored the blessing and will pour it out on His people. He will not withhold, He will pour it out. Numbers 6:22-27

"To bless" means to extend through pronouncement God's favor and goodness upon His people. The priest were instructed to do this in Numbers 6:22-27. The wonderful thing is that God endowed their words with power to bring to pass what they had spoken. The result of the blessing is two-fold. 1) the name of the Lord comes upon us. 2) the Lord covenants to bless us.

CONCLUSION:

The "tithe" is an opportunity to enter into covenant of provision and prosperity. This is seen in the account of Abraham and Melchizedek. In Genesis 14:18-24 Abraham brought the tithe Melchizedek brought the bread and wine. A covenant was ratified and the result was that Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek. This is a foreshadowing of Christ's eternal priesthood and eternal covenant with believers. Christ brings the bread and wine, we bring the tithe. A covenant is sealed, the blessing is pronounced and enjoyed.

Malachi 3:6-12 is all about restoring covenant blessing to His people. It is not about the money, it's about choosing the covenant of blessing.

The Year of Jubilee

Lev. 25:8-55, 27:16-25

Deu. 15:2, 31:10

The word jubilee is literally blowing the trumpet. The year of jubilee is the fiftieth year after seven cycles of seven years each. The year was inaugurated with the blowing of the rams horn or shophar. The blowing of the ram's horn announced liberty throughout the land.

1. A TIME OF REDEMPTION.

A special feature of jubilee was it's provision for a return of people from slavery. Also, the return of possession to the original owners. A transfer of wealth and property.

No matter how impoverished a person may become, no matter the financial difficulty jubilee signaled the return of everything to it's original owner. As long as there was a jubilee there was hope.

Jesus Christ is the believer's jubilee every day. The believer lives in a perfect perpetual jubilee. Isaiah 61: 1- 3; Luke 4: 18-19. He whom the Son sets free is free indeed.

2. TIME OF REST.

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done." Gen. 2:2

God rested on the seventh day. Man's first day of existence was a day of rest. The believer finds lasting rest in Christ.

Every seven days
there is rest

Every seven years
there is rest

Every seven cycles of seven years
is rest

The seventh millennium could be a final rest

There is a great invitation to rest in Christ. Matt. 11 :28 Faith gives entrance into rest. Heb. 4:3 Isaiah 28: 11-12 describes the rest God promises. For the believer there is a rest in death PS 16:9-11. He who enters rest in the Lord ceases from his own works. Heb. 4:10

3. A TIME OF RELEASE.

- a. A release from poverty**
- b. A release of property**
- c. A release of people**
- d. A release of promise**

Jericho's defeat is a portrait of jubilee. They marched for six days in silence, the seventh day they marched seven times, blew the jubilee trumpets and took what the lord had promised. Joshua 6

4. A TIME OF RESTORATION.

There is a time of the restoration of all things.

"Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3 :21

God has restored, is restoring, and will totally restore. The ultimate jubilee will be announced and commenced at the sound of the last trumpet. 1 Thes. 4:15-18; 1Cor. 15:51-52

The millennium will be an extended jubilee. We will have had six millenniums. The seventh could be "the millennium" a thousand years of the reign of Christ.