

Stewardship

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[0 : 00] I greet you in the name of Jesus this morning. It's been very good to be here this morning. The Lord has been speaking to us here this morning. Today, I want to talk about stewardship and probably focus a little more on the cares of this life and finances along the way here. You know, when we think of stewardship, and you can turn to Luke 16, think of stewardship. What are we stewards of?

You know, the Lord has blessed us and the Lord has given us so much. And everything that we have and everything that we are is a blessing from the Lord.

Our life, our health, our abilities, our talents, our families, our finances, our business, our time.

[1 : 26] You know, are we faithful? Are we faithful in what the Lord has given us?

The Bible tells us that it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen.

As we go through this this morning, I want to show you somewhat that many of the tests of life are to show whether you are faithful or not and to take you on.

You know, in Revelation, we have this verse where Jesus came to make war against the devil and his armies.

And it says, talking about Jesus, He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful.

[2 : 38] Remember those three words. Called, chosen, and faithful. Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen.

And what's the difference? You know, if Jesus called you, it does not say that he has chosen you yet.

But it depends a lot. You know, if, I believe all of us have a calling in life. All of us, God has a work for us to fulfill in this life.

And so he has called you. And whether he will choose you to fulfill that calling depends on your faithfulness.

Where you're at now. And as you grow. And as he takes you on. It depends whether you're faithful in what he has given you.

[3 : 36] In Luke 16, we will read here, beginning in verse 10.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

You know, and so just think. What's the very, what do we look at as the least? What's the easiest thing for us to squander?

You know, we live in a land of plenty. We have an abundance.

But let's just start with time. Each one of us, every day we live, God has given us 24 hours. 60 minutes in every hour.

[4 : 43] You know, it's so easy. And I'm not saying that you have to be out there just, you know. But, how do we spend our time?

How do we use our time? Are there things in our lives that are stealing time? Are there things that we are watching that, oh, it's just an hour.

But it's just a total waste of time. And it steals from what God is doing in our hearts. Let's just think of some of these things as we go through this this morning.

He that is faithful in least is faithful in much. He that is unjust in least is unjust in much. Verse 11.

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who shall commit to your trust the true riches. So here, it looks like, and it sounds like, Jesus is saying that mammon, money, the money we have, it's the least.

[6 : 05] The true riches. What are the true riches? I believe the true riches are the kingdom of God and being a part of that kingdom and the calling that God has upon you.

The true riches is the working of God in my life. These other things. We need money. We need houses.

We need all those things. Yes. But those will pass away someday. The things that we see, they will all pass away someday.

It's those things that we cannot see, but we see with our eye of faith. Those are the things that are the true riches. Jesus. He says, if we have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon.

You know, I believe that when God is looking for a man to fill a calling in his kingdom, in the church or wherever it might be, when God is looking for a man to put a calling on him and to send him forth in the power of the Holy Ghost, he will look at that man.

[7 : 31] You know, there's many scriptures. There are verses in Proverbs that talk about God ponders our steps and he ponders our heart. He watches the places we go and he ponders.

God is watching us. And what's he looking for? He's looking for faithful men, but he's seeing, is this man faithful in what I have given him?

Is he walking faithful in his job? Is he walking faithful with his family? Is he walking faithful with the responsibilities of life?

And if we're not faithful, he will keep on going. You know, there's a verse that says that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro across the earth looking for a man whose heart is right, is perfect with him.

You know, God, if we will give ourselves to him, if we will walk with him faithfully, there's no limit to what God can do with each one of us.

[8 : 55] verse 12, If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

You cannot serve God and money. You cannot serve God and self. It's one or the other. Romans says, I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.

It's the least that we can do. It's the least that we can give to our God. It's the least, you know, you know, Jesus died for us.

What less can we do but live for him? Well, the Pharisees, verse 14, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.

[10 : 11] They mocked him. Whatever. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts.

You know, we can say whatever we want to. We can look so good on a Sunday morning we come to church and we can look so good, but God knows our heart.

He's not deceived by the words we say. He's not deceived by the show we put up. God knows our heart. But he doesn't stop there.

He goes on, he says, For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. Well, you know, back then, I expect the Pharisees, they were highly esteemed among men.

But what's highly esteemed in our day? You know, riches and honor and all those things.

[11 : 18] All the fancy toys, the trucks and things you can imagine, all of those things and you can just keep on naming them on down the line. That's what's highly esteemed in our day.

What does God say? It's an abomination in the sight of God. Why? Why is it an abomination? It's because it steals from what God wants to do in us.

We follow pleasure. We follow those things. We follow the fun. And it will hinder us from fulfilling the will of God.

It will steal what God is doing in our lives. Jesus warned us to not allow the cares of this life to steal, to take away the true riches.

you know, you know, here in this land, here in the USA, I believe one thing that's contributed to this complicated lifestyle is just all the peer pressure and all the things that men go after and they seek after and they lift them up as that's what we want, that's what we need, that's a, we, on and on down the line.

[13 : 10] It's an abomination if it draws you away from God. A man of faith is a faithful man. You know, we all want to be a man of faith.

If you're not faithful, you're not a man of faith. many are called but few are chosen. You know, Joshua, you know, I don't think we'll, maybe we will.

Let's read a couple verses in the first chapter of Joshua. Joshua, you know, you know, as we think of the children of Israel, they had, and we'll go back and we'll look at a few other things.

They had spent 40 years in the wilderness, but now they were again ready to go into the, into the promised land. land. And, you know, this land, this was a land that God had promised to Abraham and he had promised it to Isaac and he had promised it to Jacob, to them and to their descendants after them.

He had promised this land to them. But notice what he says here to Joshua.

[14 : 51] Let's read what starts with saying, Moses, my servant is dead. Now, therefore, arise and go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, and to the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.

Verse 3, every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you as I said unto Moses. Everywhere the sole of your foot will tread upon, that I have given you.

Notice that this is the land that God promised to these people. But he is telling them, unless you walk across this land, it's not yours.

You can sit here on this side of Jordan, and you can look over Jordan, and you can say, that's our land. And the Canaanites over there, they're going to laugh at you as long as you stay on this side. You can cross over on the other side, and you can camp there and say, this is our land. And they're still going to laugh at you. Why? Because you've not walked across this land.

[16 : 09] You've not claimed it for your own. You know, and it's the same way in our Christian life. We're born again, and now we're a Christian.

And all the promises of God, they belong to me. They're mine. mine. The power of the Holy Ghost, it's mine.

The gifts of the Spirit, they're mine. Everything the Bible talks about, it's mine. But unless we walk it out in shoe leather, unless we walk it out and it becomes mine experientially, it's just like the children of Israel, camping on the banks of Jordan.

How will we experience? How will we experience the promises, the things that God has promised? You know, He gives us salvation, but we can't just stay a babe in Christ. Hebrews talks about that. Peter talks about that. we need to grow, we need to conquer every area of our life, that self that wants to rise up.

[17 : 44] It needs to be put down, it needs to be conquered. All the things that hinder us from going on and fulfilling the call of God, they need to be conquered.

That we can fulfill all the will of God. God told Joshua, everywhere your foot treads, that is yours. In other words, if you don't, it's not yours. It's the same with us today. it's the same with us today.

Verse 5, there shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers.

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper wither soever thou goest.

[19 : 12] This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

You know, we know that God is with us. And that's enough, right? So we sit in our chairs and we were thankful and we praise God that he's with us.

But he wants us to go. He wants us to move. He wants us to be effective in his kingdom. I don't know what he's telling you to do or what he will tell you to do.

But I believe God has a work for each one of us. us. And if we just sit in our pews and never do anything for him that he asks us to, we'll never go any further.

[20 : 31] God is looking for faithful men. God is looking for faithful men. And it starts with being faithful right where he's put you.

The job you have and the work you're doing, the family you're in, that's where it starts.
Deuteronomy 8.

Here we have Moses. He's exhorting the children of Israel after the 40 years before he died, before they went on into the land of Canaan.

And we'll just need to pick out a few verses here. But let's start verse 2.

And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these 40 years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.

[22 : 03] You know, God, humbled them and proved them to know what was in their heart. And I believe that's what he does with us.

When he allows those trials to come our way, when he allows those temptations to come, he allows these things to come and to test us to see what's in our heart, to see whether we will be faithful, to see whether we will put him first when it seems we can't, to see whether he is the most important in our life, or we will revert to the old.

You know what good is a faith if it's not been tested? Nobody knows if it's worth anything, but when we're tested and we're faithful, it comes out as gold.

Hallelujah. verse 3, he humbled thee, he suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know, that man does not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.

You know, we think, you know, we go and we work and we earn money and we buy our food and all of that, and we do, but it's all a gift from God.

[23 : 44] Yes. Well, God was concerned that the children of Israel, their heart was right, lest when they come into this land of plenty, they forget God.

And he goes on to talk about that. Now, let's skip on over. Well, let's read verse 12.

Lest when thou hast eaten and art full and has built goodly houses and dwelt therein and flocks multiply and your silver and your gold is multiplied and then thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God.

which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage. You know, and isn't that exactly what we see in our day?

People, you know, when they had hard times, they turned to the Lord and they served the Lord and then they have plenty and then they forget God.

[24 : 54] You know, it's just something that we need to guard against. But he warns them here of that.

And then verse 17, And thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers as it is this day.

It is God that gave them the promised land. It was God that gave them power to go into that land and to conquer it and everywhere the sole of their foot tread, it was theirs.

God gave them that power and God gave them the power to go in there and to build houses and to have houses and being yours that they didn't plant and to reap the benefits of them.

[26 : 09] God did that and today it is God that gives us the power to earn wealth, to earn a living, to earn the finances that we have, to supply our needs for our families and for the cares of this life.

It is God that blesses us with health, with strength, with the ability and the opportunity. It is God and never forget it.

Never forget it. It is God's will that we work.

You know, there's been people say, oh, I just want to serve the Lord full time.

well, you know, that's okay if God calls you to that. But you don't just one day decide, well, I'm going to go work for the Lord full time in some wherever.

[27 : 27] You know, God will take you step by step and if He has you in ministry of some sort, in some work, you know, whatever it might be and it comes to the place that it takes full time, fine.

He will provide for that. But there's, well, we don't have time to discuss all that. We'll go on for now.

But God, if we walk with Him and if we have given Him our life, He's on the throne of our hearts, and we allow Him to build us up and to raise us up and to make of us what He desires, He will use us in various and many ways.

Jesus said, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You know, we work that we might have money.

Is that money our treasure or is the kingdom of heaven our treasure? You know, if that money is our treasure, then it's going to have our heart.

[29 : 00] But if the kingdom of heaven is our treasure and it's what we live for, and money is just a tool in our life, praise God.

Praise God. God has given us the ability to, He has given us the power to get wealth, Deuteronomy says.

And so, if I understand that right, our wealth belongs to Him, along with our life, along with our heart, along with our ability, along with our future, along with everything, might it be in the hand of God.

Luke, Jesus tells us, beware of covetousness.

Beware of covetousness. What is covetousness? It's a greedy longing for more. You know, never satisfied, we never have enough. We always have that longing for more.

[30 : 13] You know, years ago, years ago, there was this millionaire, and back then, you know, I mean, what he had would be a lot, it wouldn't be much in our day, but back then it was a lot.

And somebody asked him, what does it take for happiness? And he says, just a little bit more. You know, that can be our heart if we have a dollar in our pocket.

And it's wrong. That greedy longing for more. Yes, we will need more, but in God's way, it is God's. You know, how is our life? Is the blessing of God on our life? Or does he have a controversy with us?

in Haggai. God had commanded them to build the temple. And they had all kinds of reasons why not.

[31 : 27] In Haggai chapter 1, God had a controversy with these people. And what happened?

God said, consider your ways. Consider your ways. Verse 6, ye have sown much and bring in little. Ye eat, but ye have not enough. Ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink. Ye clothe you, but there is none warm. He that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. You know, if there's never enough, consider your ways.

Consider your ways. Maybe God has a controversy with you. Maybe there's something in your life that is blocking the blessing of God.

[32 : 33] These people, they could make money, but it just seemed like they were putting it in bags that had holes. They just lost it along the way. You know, when God is blessing your life, He will bless the finances you have.

Yes. Yes. Yes. The blessing of God of utmost importance in our life.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Ephesians has admonition for us.

He says, labor working with our hands the thing which is good that we may have to give to him that need us.

You know, our labor, it produces money. It's not just for ourself. It's also to meet the needs of those round about us who are in need, who cannot provide.

[33 : 43] Another verse says, with goodwill doing service, doing our work as unto the Lord and not unto men. You know, the work that we do, do we do it heartily as unto the Lord?

Are we just trying to get by with the least, just to please men? yes, we please men with our work, but are we pleasing God?

It's good of Proverbs. I'm going to read some. Proverbs has a lot of rich admonition, very practical admonition.

Proverbs, we'll skip around here a little bit, but Proverbs 11, Proverbs 11, 24, there is that scattereth and yet increases, there is that withholdeth more than is meat, but it tendeth to poverty.

The liberal soul shall be made fat, he that watereth shall be watered also himself. You know, and right along with that, I want to get, I want to get a verse in Luke, and I want to insert that here, and I call this verse the law of increase.

[35 : 22] The law of increase. Luke 6, 38, give and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom, for with the same measure that ye meet with all it shall be measured to you again.

Give and it shall be given you. Amen. The same measure that ye meet with all it shall be measured to you again.

you know, Proverbs 11, 24, he says, there is that scattereth and yet increases. He's talking about a godly man that scattereth abroad his wealth to places where there is need, and it increases.

Why? Because of the blessing of God. There is that withholdeth wealth and it tendeth to poverty.

You know, we, and it's good to be careful with our money.

We need to be good stewards of it and not waste it and not spend it frivolously or give it away to someone that will waste it or spend it on drink or something like that.

[36 : 59] But this verse, there is that withholdeth more than is meat, more than we should, holding back more than we should, and instead of being to our benefit, it tendeth to poverty.

It tendeth to poverty. Proverbs 13, verse 11, wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labor shall increase.

You know, you know, I believe that God blesses our labor. we all have jobs, we all have a need to provide for our families.

I believe that in honest labor, God blesses our labor. But notice what he says here, wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished.

You know, we've all heard of those get quick schemes, those get rich quick schemes, you know, that you can just do a little this and that and whatever and it'll just dump in on you.

[38 : 25] Those are vanity. Those are vanity. What does it say? It shall be diminished. I think there's another verse that says that though wealth gotten in that way, it will disappear, it will get wings and fly away.

Proverbs 14, 23, in all labor there is profit, but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury, it tendeth to poverty.

In labor there is profit. You see those guys standing out there, with a half-finished building, and they're all gathered around talking for half a day.

That's poverty. To get to work, there would be profit. 18, verse 9.

He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

[39 : 56] You know, slothful in his work, and many times that translates to slothful in our time. we waste our time, waste our time.

He that is slothful is a brother to him that is a great waster. You know, if we're slothful, we don't make the money that we should.

We're brother to the man that makes a lot of money and wastes it away on useless things. Proverbs chapter 3.

Start in verse 5. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel and marrow to thy bones. Very clear here.

[41 : 15] Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health, physical health to you. Verse 9.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase.

so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. You know, verse 9, he says, honor the Lord with our substance.

To honor the Lord with our substance is to give to the Lord of the money that we have, of our wealth, of our riches, to give to the Lord, to honor him with that.

And then, with the first fruits of all thine increase. That's a tithe, to give to the Lord of all our increase. And if we do this, notice what he says, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

You know, God, when we give, when we give to him, he will bless us, and there will be an abundance, there will be much more than if we hoard it all to ourselves.

[42 : 32] Yes. Another verse. Don't see it right now.

Maybe we'll come across it later. It has to be right here, though. There it is. Proverbs 19. Proverbs 19.

Verse 17. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord. You want to lend money to the Lord?

You know, we lend money to people. You never know if they're going to pay it back or not. But you lend it to the Lord, you don't have to worry.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he repay him again. Hallelujah. God will repay.

[43 : 46] God will repay. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. verse 27. Cease my son to hear the instruction that causes to err from the words of knowledge.

You know, there's many voices out there, and there's much instruction out there, and we need to choose what we listen to, and we need to block out the voices that cause us to err from the word of God and from the direction that God has given us.

Second Thessalonians says that we should work, every man should work that they can eat of their own bread. In other words, we need to work that we can provide for our own need and our own family.

Now, Malachi, chapter 3. You know, Proverbs, we pointed out giving and we pointed out tithe. In Malachi, God had a controversy with these people. In chapter 1, he talks to them about bringing less than the best.

[45 : 17] you know, when the children of Israel, when they brought a sacrifice, they picked out the very best out of the flock. Not one that was lame, not one that was hurt, not one that was sick, no, but the very best.

The very best. verse 1, verse 14, he says, but cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrifices unto the Lord a corrupt thing.

For I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen. You know, and if we could keep this in our heart, that our God is a great king, and his name is dreadful among the heathen, and our God is worthy of all that we can give him.

Our God is worthy of our life, a living sacrifice for him. Our God is worthy, and the least that we can do for him is live for him.

But he says, curse it be the deceiver that brings a corrupt thing, that brings something less than the best. Now chapter 3, verse 8, Will a man rob God?

[46 : 53] Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee, in tithes and offerings? Ye are cursed with a curse. for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith. Say of the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

You know, do you think God is able to do this? God puts out the challenge to us. He puts out this challenge.

He says, bring all the tithes into the storehouse, bring all the offerings, bring them all in, bring them into my house.

And I challenge you to do it. Sayeth the Lord of hosts, prove me now herewith, sayeth the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, there shall not be room enough to receive it.

[48 : 21] And he doesn't stop there. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

You know, if the blessing of the Lord is on your life, you know, it doesn't say that you'll never have a breakdown, you know, these trucks we use, they're not made to run forever.

They will wear out, they will break down, but you know, there's many things that happen along the way that God, I believe, if his blessing is upon us, he will keep us.

He will rebuke the devourer, that thing that comes and it steals, it comes and it takes away. You know, you bring a thousand dollars home and here's this bill that just came out of nowhere, you didn't plan on it, but there it is, you gotta pay for it, because you had something go wrong.

God will rebuke the devourer if we will bring in the tithes into the storehouse. you know, while we're talking about money, well, let's turn to Luke, no, let's turn to 2 Corinthians, that's where we're going next, but, you know, God blesses labor, he blesses your labor, you go out and you do an honest day's work and God will bless that, and he will, if we are his, he will direct us, he will direct our path, if we will honor him, we will acknowledge him in all our ways, if we allow him to direct our path, death,

[50 : 47] I believe there will be much less waste, much less the devourer will get, debt, you know, we live in a day of easy credit, I mean, you can have bad credit, you can have poor credit, and you can get credit cards and you can get loans and you can get all those things and you can go live a lavish lifestyle without earning it, let me tell you, credit cards are not God's provision, you know, we've come to the point where credit cards are kind of a necessity in our day, but if you use them, pay them off every month, you know, there's many traps, and that's one of them, that's one of them, to be a good steward,

I believe we need to, we need to practice biblical financial principles, tithe is one, working in honest days, work is another one, providing for our family, living within our means, spend less than you make, you know, proverbs said, the first fruits of our increase, you know, that's not, you know, if there happens to be a little bit left at the end of the week, no, it's you bring that check home, and the tithe is God's right off the top, not off the bottom, not off the bottom, I believe in those things, the day-to-day things that we buy, if there's no money, we don't buy it, you know, if we get back to that, we'd avoid that snare of the credit card we can't pay, that covetousness needs to be overcome, it's a giant, you know, that which is highly esteemed among men, you know, the latest, the latest of everything, and all those toys, and all those things, they need to be overcome, yes, 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians, no, it's actually 2 Corinthians, well, 1 Corinthians 16, you know, there's people that want to argue that the New Testament, we don't, we don't give money, have you ever heard such a thing, in 1 Corinthians 16, 1 and 2, the apostle told them, he said, now concerning the collection for the saints as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye, upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come, so they were taking up offerings in the early church, now in 2 Corinthians chapter 8,

I'm going to read here an account of this church, the church of Macedonia, moreover brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality, for to their power I bear record, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God, insomuch that we desire Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

[56 : 19] So here he's talking about giving, and he calls it a grace, a grace of God. It is a portion of the grace of God upon you to give to the work of God.

The grace of giving, and he points it out here to the Corinthians, how the church in Macedonia, how this grace of God worked in them, and they took an offering, and they gave it so willingly.

They gave it so willingly, and now he desired Titus, that he would help him, that Titus would help them, that this grace would also become evident in their church, in their lives.

Now, chapter 9, and we'll start in verse 6. But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

[57 : 51] God loveth a cheerful giver. And notice verse 6, he that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly.

You know, back on the farm, you know, we tried to put plenty of seed on there. You know, we'd plant the corn, and you know, you always tried to make sure that that planter's working properly, and it's getting that seed in there.

You know, you didn't look at that big field and say, well, let me see, I can save a little money if I put the seed about this far apart, I can save me some money planting that field. No, if you did that, you reaped sparingly.

But if you sow abundantly, if you sow boundlessly, you will reap boundlessly. We must purpose in our heart what we will give.

He says, not grudgingly. You know, if we give grudgingly, there will be no reward. reward. There will be no reward. But if we give willingly, if we give to God willingly, He will reward us.

[59 : 08] He will reward us. If we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully. God will reward.

Yes, He will. Let's look at verse 8. God is able to make all grace abound toward you. that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth forever. Now he that minister a seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.

Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God. You know, we serve a God that believes in bountifulness. He believes in plenty, not just scarcely getting by.

[60 : 28] You know, our God, if we will give to Him abundantly, He will abundantly bless us. What did Malachi say? He will bless us so much that we cannot contain it.

What an awesome God. Our God, verse 10, is the one that ministers seed to the sower.

He gives us that seed that we sow. We go out and we work. Why? Because He's given us a job. He's given us strength to do it.

And He gives us seed. And we sow it. And He multiplies our seeds sown. You know, you don't eat. You don't eat what is meant for seed. You know, if you take that seed and you grind it up and you eat it, there won't be a harvest this fall.

[61 : 35] but there's some that seed to sow and there's other that's for bread, for food. Our God, being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, bountifulness, our God, bless us, bless us abundantly.

A couple more thoughts on debt. Proverbs 22 verse 7 says, the borrower is servant to the lender. you know, if you borrow, you become a servant. And I've seen many people, they may have felt the call of God.

Oh, but I can't because I have this payment I have to make every month. and it's really not worth what I paid for it.

I can't sell this thing. I can't pay it all. So I'm stuck. You know, if we allow such a situation in our life, we're a slave to that debt, not a servant of God.

[63 : 12] So whenever, just keep that in mind. Next time you get ready to sign that loan, when you sign that, you become a servant. You become a servant.

The borrower is servant to the lender. I want to get a couple verses in Nehemiah. These people, they were servants because of their sin.

And many times not putting God, not allowing God his proper place in our hearts brings us into financial bondage.

That's the way it works many times. But in Nehemiah chapter 9 verse 36, you know, these people, they were again living in the promised land, in the land that God had given to their forefathers. but even living there. Verse 36, behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it.

[64 : 43] Now just look at the children of Israel. Israel. You know, the other verses we read about Joshua, they were just ready to go in and to conquer that land.

But they had sinned and they drifted away from God and here, the children, many generations down, they were now servants in this same land.

You know, God had allowed them to come back into the land, but they were still servants in this land that God had given them. Now notice verse 37, and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins.

Also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure and we are in great distress.

You know, let's take heed to the warnings in God's word. The borrower is servant to the lender.

[66 : 04] And these people, you know, let's just think of our day. And we all know people that because of not following biblical financial principles and maybe even living a careless life in sin, you know, there's a lot of different situations and circumstances.

But now they're a slave to the debt that they created. The borrower is servant to the lender. And it yieldeth much increase to the kings out there.

You know, if you go throughout the land and throughout the world, the most costly and the fanciest buildings are what? They're banks.

Owned by banks. banks. And they become rich because everyone's their servant.

it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins.

[67 : 26] You know, I believe. I believe if we will live right and if we will allow God to order our steps. You know, I'm not saying it's wrong to have a mortgage, to have a house, and so on.

But there's a lot of other debt. There's a lot of other things I believe God does not want us to get a loan for. And especially credit card debt.

If you're in that trap, you want to get out of it. because they rule over you.

You've committed. When you got that money, you've committed to pay it back, to pay the interest, and you owe them. Now they're an evil king, and they're your master.

Bring in all the tithe, the offerings, bring it into the storehouse, and God will bless.

[68 : 59] He will pour out a blessing you cannot receive. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you that you have blessed us so abundantly.

Lord, I pray that you would help us, Lord, to honor you with our substance and with the first fruit of our increase, that you can bless us, that our barns will overflow with plenty.

Lord, that our lives will overflow with your abundant blessing. Lord, help us.

Lord, that in every decision we make, we make it according to your will and your plan. Lord, that we not come into bondage, but Lord, that we will be free to serve you with all our heart and with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our substance, with everything you've given us and blessed us with.

Might it be yours. Help us, Lord, this day. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.