

Being Both Blessed and A Blessing

Intro. 1. I believe it's God's will that we be blessed & a blessing... 2. God loves to bless us – Eph.1.3, Matt.6.33, Mal.3.10–12. 3. God wants us to shower his blessings on others – Matt.10.8(Freely you've rec'd, freely give), Acts 20.35(it's better to give than receive). 4. I don't understand why pastors don't talk about this subject...this isn't self-serving, but about being obedient to God's desires and pointing you in the direction of blessing...

1. It all (being blessed & a blessing) begins with obedience – Mal.3.10–12.
 - a. The tithe belongs to the Lord. You have to begin here. Until you reach this point, you will not be in a position to receive all God's blessings and be the type of blessing to others you desire.
 - b. Ex of taking someone's watch and then giving it back to them as a gift. I am not giving them a gift; I'm simply returning what already belongs to them...same way with tithe
 - c. We know automatically what to give to a waiter and don't think anything about it when they do a good job...We fear offending them, but don't fear offending God when we don't return the tithe.
 - d. Didache – early church teaching...the firstfruits are brought to the church...I believe the tithe goes to the local church that you're a part of.

2. Position yourself to bless others
 - a. Once you have the tithing issue established, ask God to change your heart about giving...turn you into a river rather than a reservoir...big deal for some of us...God is a giver and it's easy for him to change this. Pray together: God make me into a giver...!

- b. Don't get into debt or Get out of debt (understand about mortgage)...sacrifice of taking another job...cutting back on eating out or entertainment...quit buying things with credit card not intending to pay them off at the end of the month.
 - i. Explain how to do it – begin with the smallest and roll it into the next one once that's eliminated
 - ii. Continue to tithe...don't stop or it will get bad
 - c. Simplify your life – getting smaller rather than larger
 - d. Have emergency savings built up
- 3. Look for the open doors – 2 Cor. 8–9
 - a. The context of 2 Corinthians – Paul taking up an offering for the poor Christians in Jerusalem...
 - b. What or who are you connected to where God seems to be moving? You want to sow seeds in those places where God is working
 - c. You also want to sow those seeds in good soil – do the people, ministries or businesses produce good fruit...
- 4. Begin to grace give – 2 Cor.9.6–7
 - a. You decide...the tithe is 10%, whereas grace giving is decided by the giver...your crop will be proportionate to your giving.
 - b. Agricultural principle – The Principle of Increase – (You get more than you give) true in agricultural world if it didn't it wouldn't be worth it...spiritually it's the same...you get back more than you sown. Abundance – God isn't just trying to get by, but he really wants to bless you!
 - c. What Stephanie & I do...
 - d. Some people teach that God will bless your finances b/c of the tithe, but He will multiply them b/c of grace giving.
- 5. Watch for the blessings – 2 Cor.9.8–11.
 - a. Financially – there will be more seed. My testimony of sowing seed in three places: \$60 in K; \$100 in M to go to S. LA. ; \$200 to love offering for Sword & Spirit conference...we've seen \$420
 - b. Spiritually – both for the giver & receiver & the church. Everyone benefits from a giving environment. We are most

like God when we give (financially & otherwise), so when the church has an attitude of giving it is felt in that spiritual environment.

- c. KEEP IN MIND: Harvest season & Planting season aren't the same time..don't necessarily expect an immediate return...the principle of interval.

Challenge: Begin tithing....begin grace giving.