



Knowing God Through Giving

November 17, 2002

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Introduction:

How many of you are up for a challenge? God challenges us to put Him to the test. God wants us to know Him in a practical way. He wants us to know His blessing, and He wants us to know His provision. He wants us to see He will honor His word and is faithful. One way we can know God in these things is in tithing.

Today we are going to continue talking about knowing God and we are considering knowing God through giving. God so loved that He gave. He set the pace in giving. I believe that you can give without loving, but you can't love without giving.

To give means to release. The definition of give is *to deliver or yield*.

Money is a tool that God allows us to use. It is one of the resources that we are trusted with in this life. We are also trusted with time, energy, and health.

TEXT: Malachi 3:10

- I. Give your self to obeying God. He wants our obedience more than He wants sacrifice
 - A. Story from I Samuel 15 – Here King Saul is instructed by God to destroy the Amalakites. He was to go against them and destroy everything of theirs. He goes to battle and the soldiers captured AGAG the king and brought back with them the fat sheep and cattle – to sacrifice to the Lord. The Lord spoke to Samuel the prophet and said, “Tell Saul I wanted your obedience not sacrifice. I am more pleased in the obedience that someone brings me rather than the sacrifices they would make.” Saul and his soldiers wanted to keep everything that was good in their eyes to give to God. God simply wanted them to obey Him.

In this story, from I Samuel 15, the enemy would have been totally destroyed. Everything was God's to start with, and God did not want His people to have anything that would be a stumbling block or that which would ensnare them away from Him.

- B. If God has spoken to you about some issues from His word, then it is His desire and in your best interest for you to act in obedience to His word.

It is good for us to give; it helps us understand the principle that none of what is trusted to us is owned by us. It is lent to us for our use. Someday we will answer how we used the resources that were trusted to us.

In giving to God, we come to know God's blessing, we come to know God's provision, and we come to know God's faithfulness

God's blessing rests on obedience. God blessed Abraham, Moses, Noah, Esther, and many others that are written about in the Bible, because of their obedience.

One who has been trusted must be found faithful.

1 Cor. 4:2

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

God has modeled this for us. He is faithful to His word, His covenant, and His children. God is faithful to His promises.

Luke 16:10-12

“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?”

When we look at the resources that we have, they all come from God. Time, strength, health, finances, they all belong to God. He created them, and so we are simply those who have been trusted with these resources. When we look at things that way, we understand that it all belongs to God.

II. Accept God's challenge of blessing.

God wants to bless. He wants there to be food in His house, He wants us to test Him. God is sovereign and will bless who He will. There are principles in God's word that God obligates Himself to and it is predetermined what His reaction will be.

Here is one of them. If we are faithful in handling the resources that God trusts to us, and that includes money, then God will bless. He says He will bless us in this way.

This is the only place in scripture where we are challenged and encouraged to test God. God wants us to be assured that He can be trusted, that He will be faithful. He wants the pleasure to prove to us that He will not fail us.

I am reminded of the words of that old Hymn – *Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus just to take Him at His word Just to rest upon His promise, just to know thus saith*

the Lord. Jesus, Jesus how I trust Him, how I've proved Him o're and o're. Jesus, Jesus precious Jesus, oh for grace to trust Him more.

God wants the opportunity to prove to us as His people that He is a great provider, so He challenges us to show Him we are good managers of the trust He has provided us with. When He sees we are trustworthy with resources, then He pours out blessing and trusts us with more.

An example of the blessing of God on His people when they honored and obeyed the principle of giving is found in II Chronicles 31:10.

Hezekiah was 25 years old when he came to power as king of Israel. He was a godly king, who determined that he would honor God in Israel and restore worship the way God desired. Part of that worship was for the people to bring tithes and offerings and in this way honor the Lord according to His law. As soon as the decree went out, the people responded and gave generously. For four months this giving went on, and at the end of that time, Hezekiah came and saw the heaps of what the people had given unto God. Hezekiah asked what all of this was.

2 Chron. 31:10

“...and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, ‘Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over.’”

God says, “Test Me whether I will keep My promise of blessing you, on condition of your doing your part.”

III. The principle of giving and receiving

Luke 6:38

“Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

The measure and attitude of our giving, will determine the measure and attitude of receiving. If we give grudgingly, we will not have a joyful attitude when we receive. If we give in stinginess, that's that way we will receive and be blessed. If we give liber-

ally, then what is returned will be pressed down, shaken together and running over.

If we consider this verse in its surrounding verses, we see that Jesus is talking about forgiveness, judgment, and repayment. The principle is that in whatever way you give, there will be more of the same.

Any one who has put together a recipe knows that if you pack something in a measuring cup you can get more in if you pack it and shake it and pack it together. In other words you are trying to get the most into what you are about to give to the recipe.

IV. Give yourself to God

God will bless you with forgiveness. As we give Him our sin, He gives us His righteousness, and we

Conclusion:

A man was driving down a road and he almost didn't see the old lady, stranded on the side of the road. But even in the dim light of day, he could see she needed help. So he pulled up in front of her Mercedes and got out. His Pontiac was still sputtering when he approached her.

Even with the smile on his face, she was worried. No one had stopped to help for the last hour or so. Was he going to hurt her? He didn't look safe; he looked poor and hungry. He could see that she was frightened, standing out there in the cold. He knew how she felt. It was a chill which only fear can put in you. He said, "I'm here to help you ma'am. Why don't you wait in the car where it's warm? By the way, my name is Bryan."

Well, all she had was a flat tire, but for an old lady, that was bad enough. Bryan crawled under the car looking for a place to put the jack, skinning his knuckles a time or two. Soon he was able to change the tire, but he had to get dirty and his hands hurt. As he was tightening up the lug nuts, she rolled down the window and began to talk to him. She told him that she was from St. Louis and was only just passing through. She couldn't thank him enough for coming to her aid.

Bryan just smiled as he closed her trunk. She asked him how much she owed him. Any amount would have been all right with her. She had already imagined all the awful things that could have happened had he not stopped. Bryan never thought twice about the money. This was not a job to him. This was helping someone in need, and God knows there were plenty who had given him a hand in the past...

He had lived his whole life that way, and it never occurred to him to act any other way. He told her that if she really wanted to pay him back, the next time she saw someone who needed help, she could give that person the assistance that they needed, and Bryan added "...and think of me."

He waited until she started her car and drove off. It had been a cold and depressing day, but he felt good as he headed for home, disappearing into the twilight.

A few miles down the road the lady saw a small cafe. She went in to grab a bite to eat, and take home. It was a dingy looking restaurant. Outside were two old gas pumps. The whole scene was unfamiliar to her. The cash register was like the telephone of an out of work actor - it didn't ring much. Her waitress came over and brought a clean towel to wipe her wet hair. She had a sweet smile, one that even being on her feet for the whole day couldn't

know the blessing of His forgiveness. As we give Him our past, He gives us a future, and we know the blessing of hope. As we give Him our fears, He gives us His peace, and we know the blessing of calmness. We cannot out give God. Whatever we receive from God is always better and in greater measure than what we gave to Him.

As I study and read, and seek God, I have come to the realization that giving myself to God is an ongoing process.

As we give to God, we know Him more. We understand His heart and nature, we understand His love, we understand His power to provide, we understand that all the resources and wealth are His to begin with and He simply trusts us with those resources.

erase. The lady noticed that the waitress was nearly eight months pregnant, but she never let the strain and aches change her attitude.

The old lady wondered how someone who had so little could be so giving to a stranger. Then she remembered Bryan. After the lady finished her meal and the waitress went to get change for her hundred dollar bill, the lady slipped right out the door. She was gone by the time the waitress came back. She wondered where the lady could be, and then she noticed something written on the napkin under which were 4 \$100 bills. There were tears in her eyes when she read what the lady wrote. It said, "You don't owe me anything, I have been there too. Somebody once helped me out, the way I'm helping you. If you really want to pay me back, here is what you do: Do not let this chain of love end with you."

Well, there were tables to clear, sugar bowls to fill, and people to serve, but the waitress made it through another day. That night when she got home from work and climbed into bed, she was thinking about the money and what the lady had written. How could the lady have known how much she and her husband needed it? With the baby due next month, it was going to be hard.

She knew how worried her husband was, and as he lay sleeping next to her, she gave him a soft kiss and whispered soft and low, "Everything's gonna be all right; I love you, Bryan."(Author Unknown)