

Faith is Essential



God's Abundance (Part 13)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme for this week: God's Abundance.

Our study of this theme has led us to the list of blessings and curses found in Deuteronomy, chapter 28. We've seen that both blessings and curses alike cover every area of our lives—including the area of financial and material needs.

We've also seen that God, in His infinite mercy, redeemed us from the curses through the substitutionary death of Jesus on the cross. The Scripture says, "Jesus redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us, that we might receive the blessing." Every aspect of the curse that's unfolded in Deuteronomy, chapter 28 came upon Jesus on the cross. In particular, He bore the poverty curse—hunger, thirst, nakedness, lack of all things. All that was absolutely and literally fulfilled in Jesus on the cross. He bore the poverty curse that we might receive the blessing of God's abundance. The practical outworking of this redemption in the area of financial and material needs is summed up in two statements of Paul, both found in 2nd Corinthians. The first, 2nd Corinthians, chapter 8, verse 9:

> "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." (NIV)

That's the exchange. He took our poverty that we might enjoy His riches.

And the actual outworking of the exchange is stated in the next chapter of 2nd Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 8:

> "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (NIV)

I pointed out that in that one verse, in the original Greek, the word "all" occurs five times; the word "abound" occurs twice. That's abundance. I don't see how language could express abundance more totally than that and that's the outworking of God's grace made available to us through the cross. Now, all this is by grace. It's most important to see that. The key

word there is "grace." We cannot earn grace. Anything that we can earn is not grace. On the other hand, we are required to fulfill the conditions to receive grace. See, there's a mistake that you can make either way. You can try to earn God's grace. You can't do that. Grace, by definition, cannot be earned. Then you may try to receive God's grace without meeting the conditions, but you can't do that either. So it's important to see, we cannot earn God's grace but we must fulfill the conditions to receive it and the conditions are not earning it; they're simply meeting God's conditions.

Today, I'm going to deal with the conditions that we have to fulfill. I'm going to start with the primary condition which is summed up in one short, simple word: FAITH.

Faith is the essential condition. This is brought out in so many places in the New Testament but we'll just look at a few of those passages. First of all in Hebrews 11, verse 6:

> "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." (NIV)

Notice there's a "must" in that verse. Anyone who comes to God must—this is an unvarying requirement of God. Anyone who comes to God must do what?—must believe. That is exercise faith. He must believe two things; the first that God exists. I think most people believe that, but that by itself is not enough. He must also believe that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Now many people who come to God are not really convinced that if they earnestly seek God, He will reward them. But the Scripture says that's the basis on which we must come to God, that if we earnestly seek Him, we believe He will reward us, that He'll meet our needs, that He'll fulfill His promises. So that's the first basic requirement, we must believe. We must believe that if we seek God earnestly, He will reward us, and this applies in the area of finance. One of the areas in which God will reward our earnestly seeking Him, if we meet the conditions, is in the area of finance.

And then in Romans 1:17, one of the great key verses of the New Testament:

> "For in it [that's in the Gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by his faith.'" (NASB)

In that key verse, the word "faith" occurs three times. The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith and the revelation is this: The righteous man shall live by his faith. The only basis for righteous living that's acceptable with God is the faith basis. We have to live by faith.

The word "live" is one of the most all-inclusive words that we can use. It covers everything we do, simple or complicated, regular or unusual. It covers such things as eating, sleeping, talking, walking. It covers every activity. All those activities have to be based on faith if we are to be reckoned righteous with God. It includes the area of finance. Many Christians don't exercise faith in the area of finance. Consequently they're not operating on the only acceptable basis of righteousness. You may be just an ordinary wage earner. You may have no special opportunities, you might think, to exercise faith, but the truth of the matter is that you too must exercise faith for your finances. Do not limit God to doing just what your salary would seem to indicate as possible. You've got to live by faith in the area of finance.

A little later on in Romans, in Romans, chapter 14, verse 23, Paul sums up the opposite side. He's dealing with the question of eating. He says:

> "The man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin." (NIV)

Notice that latter part—everything that does not come from faith is sin. Put the two together—the righteous man shall live by his faith. The only basis of righteous living is faith and everything that does not come from faith is sin. Paul says it both ways, positive and negative, and living includes everything. Paul applies it to eating but it applies just as much to our finance. Our finance has to be based on faith for us to be reckoned righteous before God in that area of our lives.

Now let's consider how we can apply the principle of faith in the matter of finance. In Luke 6:38 Jesus makes it very clear. This is what He says:

> "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." (NIV)

See the element of faith? Give first, and it will be given to you. That act of giving first before you receive is faith. Jesus says don't wait to receive. Start to give, and when you give, it will be given back to you far more abundantly than you gave, but the measure in which you gave ultimately determines the measure in which you will receive. There'll be an increase but the increase will be based on the measure in which you gave.

So the faith principle is built into those words of Jesus, "Give, and it shall be given to you."

And then, in 2 Corinthians, chapter 9, verses 6 and 7, Paul uses sowing and reaping. He says sowing is giving; reaping is receiving back again. He applies a metaphor that comes from agriculture but he uses it in the matter of finance. He implies that the same kind of laws that operate in agriculture, operate in the financial realm. If we want to sow, if we want to reap, first of all we have to sow. This is what he says:

> "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (NIV)

Notice the theme there is giving financially, but Paul says it's like sowing. If you want to reap, you have to sow first and the measure in which you sow will determine the measure in which you reap. Reaping will come in greater abundance than you sowed but it will be related to the measure in which you sowed and Paul says that's true in our finance. If we want to reap, we have to sow. If we want to receive, we have to give. That's the built-in principle of faith.

And then going back to the Old Testament, the principle is the same there. In Malachi 3, verse 10, God says to Israel:

> "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. 'Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'" (NIV)

You see, the same principle, "Bring the tithe and then I'll bless it," says the Lord. Test me in this way—God requires us that we put Him to the test. We may feel we haven't enough money, that there's nothing we can afford. But God says, "Give me the first tenth of your income and I will open the floodgates and pour out a blessing upon you." I've heard people say, "I'm too poor to tithe." I don't believe that. In fact I'll tell you what I believe, if you're poor, you're too poor not to tithe because that's God's condition. Give and it shall be given, sow and you will reap, bring the tithe into the storehouse. God says, "When you meet my conditions, in faith, without waiting to see the results, then the result will follow."

So the basic principle to enter into God's abundance on the basis of the atonement of Jesus is the faith principle, give and it shall be given to you, sow and you will reap.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow, I'll continue with this theme of God's Abundance. I'll be explaining further conditions for receiving and enjoying God's abundance.

Radio Program

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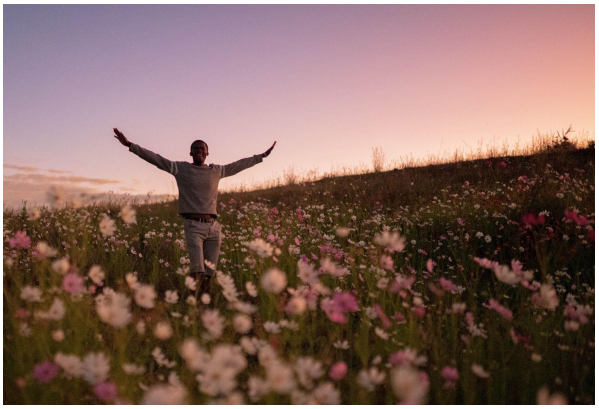

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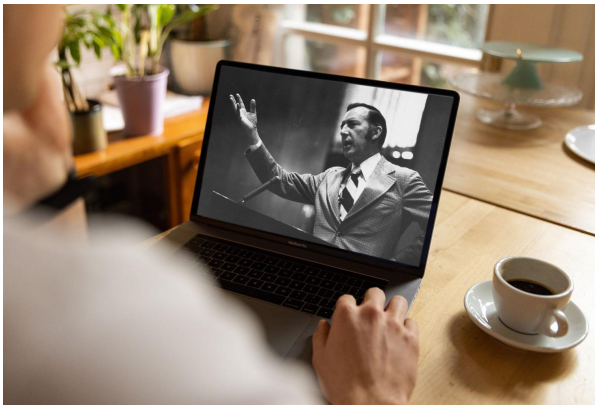

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