

Right Motives and Attitudes



God's Abundance (Part 16)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week sharing with you Keys to Successful Living which God has placed in my hand through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry.

This week I'm going to continue—and complete—the theme that we've been following for the last three weeks: God's Abundance.

But first, let me say thank you to those of you who've been writing to me. Before I finish this talk, we'll be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write—even if it's only a brief personal note.

Now back to our theme: God's Abundance.

We've seen that God's Abundance is made available to us, as believers, on one basis only—the cross. On the cross, Jesus exhausted the poverty curse that we, in turn, might receive and enjoy God's abundance. The outworking of this is summed up by two statements of Paul in Second Corinthians. The first in 2 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)

There's the exchange in respect to the poverty curse. Jesus became poor with the poverty curse due to us that in return we might inherit the riches due to Him. And then in Second Corinthians chapter 9 in verse 8 Paul explains how this works out:

> "And 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)

We see there it's grace and that the grace of God is abundant—abundant even in the financial realm. And as a result of God's grace abounding toward us we can live in a condition in which all things, at all times, having all that we need, we may abound to every good work.

There are two important points to note in that verse. First of all it is all by grace. We cannot earn it but it's received only through faith. That is always the rule. By grace through faith. The two are always directly related. Grace cannot be earned. It can only be received through faith.

And then the purpose of God's abundance and this is what I'm going to emphasize. It's for every good work. In my talks this week I'm going to dwell on this theme: for every good work. It's not for our own selfish end. It's not for our own satisfaction or glorification, but it's for every good work. I'm going to share with you the various kinds of good works which God makes His abundance available, but today I'm going to deal specifically with the motives nd attitudes we need to cultivate in looking to God for His abundance. It's very easy to look to God for His abundance but to have wrong motives and wrong attitudes. You see, motives and attitudes are a primary importance with God. God doesn't look at man as man looks at himself or even as we look at one another. In First Samuel chapter 16 verse 7 the Lord told Samuel something when he came to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be the future king of Israel. Jesse looked at the first son who was tall and handsome and impressive and he thought this must be the Lord's anointed. But the Lord spoke to him and told him something which is of general significance and consequence in all our relationships to men.

> "The Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" (NIV)

That's at the very essence of what we are talking about. God does not see as man sees. Man just looks at the outward appearance—he hears the words, he sees the appearance, he forms his conclusions. But the Lord looks right below the surface at a man's motives and his heart attitude.

You see this can apply, for instance, in the realm of business. Two men may be in the same kind of business, outwardly pursuing the same goals, using the same methods. Outwardly there is nothing to distinquish the one from the other, but inwardly the motives of the one are selfish whereas the other is genuinely concerned with extending God's Kingdom. So God will withhold abundance from the former—the one whose motives are selfish, but grant it to the latter—the one who sincerely desires the extension of God's Kingdom. Now there is nothing on the surface that would indicate why God should do that, but God looks below the surface, He looks at the motives and the attitudes of our hearts.

The Bible has many warnings against pursuing wealth with selfish motives. We really need to take these to heart. In Proverbs 23 verses 4 and 5:

> "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." (NIV)

That's a person who looks at riches with a wrong motive, with a selfish, ambitious motive.

I've been at times in meetings where businessmen have been together sometimes they've been trying to persuade me about something and they've got this plan, this project, this invention whatever it may be. And they sit down and discuss what they'll do with the second million after they've made the first. And you know what I have discovered about such men? They never make the first million. So all their time spent discussing what they would do with the second million is wasted. "Cast but a glance at riches [Proverb says], and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." That really is true to experience.

Again, in First Timothy chapter 6 verses 9 and 10 Paul gives a very solemn warning, and this is especially for Christians:

> "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (NIV)

Alas, I've seen that happen to believers whom I've known. Eager for money, they've wandered from the faith, their motives have changed, they've begun to put money before God and before the Kingdom of God, and they have pierced themselves through with many griefs. Do not have that ambition to get rich. Have the ambition to serve God and to extend His Kingdom.

And then in Luke 12 there is a parable that Jesus related that applies very much. The parable of the rich man whose

ground produced a good crop.

> "He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.' And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of goods laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" (NIV)

This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God. See, it's not being rich that's the problem. It's being rich with the wrong motives and the wrong attitudes, storing up things for yourself and not being rich toward God and that is foolishness. The Bible is so plain. God is so plain and so outspoken. When He spoke to that man and told him his soul was to be required of him that night, He said you fool, you fool.

Friend, I wonder how it is with you. If God were to say to you, "Your soul will be required from you tonight." Would God have to call you also a fool because you have been rich for yourself, but not been rich toward God. It's important to ask how can we protect ourselves against these wrong motives and these wrong attitudes which can be so deceptive and yet so disastrous.

I want to suggest to you two main remedies. The first is check your motives. Why are you seeking prosperity, success, abundance? Is it out of personal ambition? Is it out of covetousness? Is it out of pride? Are you self-centered or are you really sincerely seeking the extension of God's Kingdom. Check your motive.

And secondly, let me suggest another remedy which I think will give great security. Let God add to you in His way and His time. Don't you go out for these things. You go out for the Kingdom of God and let God add.

There are two Scriptures I'd like to give you in this connection. Deuteronomy 28 verse 2:

> "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God." (NASB)

I love that phrase "the blessings will overtake you if you obey the Lord your God. In other words, you don't have to run after the blessings; you have to cultivate obedience to the Lord.

And when you walk in the path of obedience to the Lord, then the blessings overtake you. That's the kind of prosperity that is desirable. That's the kind of wealth that has God's blessing with it. You are not seeking wealth. You're seeking to obey God. But because you are walking in the path of obedience, His blessings come upon you and overtake you.

And there is the words of Jesus in Matthew 6 verse 33:

> "But seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (NASB)

You see, it's a question of priorities. What are we really seeking? Are we seeking wealth first then we cannot have God's blessings. But if we're seeking God's Kingdom and God's righteousness then God guarantees that He will add to us all the things that we need, all the material things. Jesus said you don't need to be too concerned about the material things—your Father knows you need those things. But you get your priorities right, you focus you mind and your will on obeying God, on seeking the extension of His Kingdom, on going after His righteousness, and God will take care of all these things.

I want to testify as I close out of personal experience. It really works. God keeps His side of the bargain.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. I will start sharing on specific good works for which God makes His abundance available to us.

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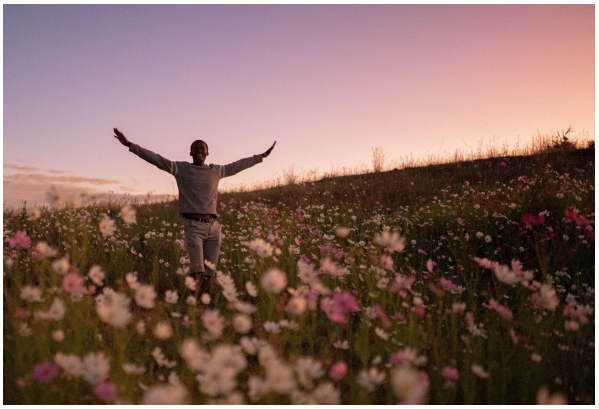

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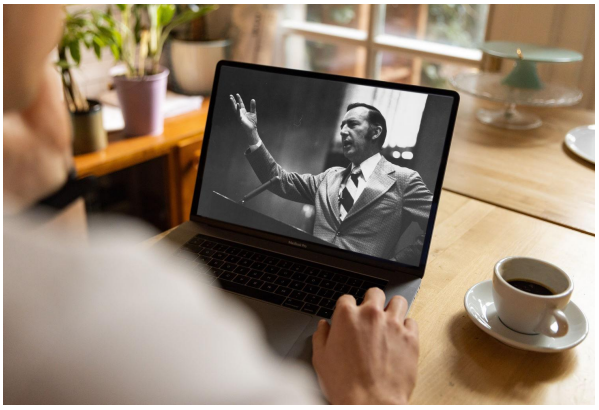

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