

The Grace of Giving



God's Plan for Your Money (Part 6)
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'll be continuing with the theme that I commenced last week, "God's Plan for Your Money."

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have 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 Plan for Your Money."

In my talks on this theme last week, I shared that God has a plan for every area of our life and that includes our money. Our money is not outside God's will and God's plan for our lives. Furthermore, our attitude to money reveals our attitude to God. We have a choice between God or mammon—we cannot serve both. And offering, our money or whatever it may be, is an essential part of worship. And when we give our money to God, we're giving an important part of ourselves—our skills, our talents, our time, our strength and so on.

I also explained last week a simple way that's both practical and scriptural to put God first with our money and that is tithing. Tithing means systematically setting aside the first tenth of your income for God and not encroaching on that or taking that first but always seeing that God gets His portion before you begin to use the rest of your income for any other portion. The Scripture reveals very clearly that to practice tithing faithfully brings God's blessing; but to deal unfaithfully with our money brings God's curse. However, tithing is only the foundation. On this foundation of tithing, we build with various kinds of offerings which are over and above the tithe. The Bible also teaches us to help the poor with alms or charity and the Bible reveals that proper giving of our money is an insurance against evil times. When evil times come upon the world, upon the people around about us, if we have dealt faithfully with our money, God will protect us and watch over us and our families because we have committed our finance to Him.

Now, in my talk today, I'm going to speak about the spiritual key to the only kind of giving that is truly acceptable to God and it's expressed in one simple and beautiful word—the word is "grace." We're not talking about giving by law or by commandment but in the New Testament we're talking about giving that comes out of grace. This is what Paul speaks about in that great giving chapter that we've quoted several times already—2 Corinthians 8:7. He says to the Christians in Corinth:

> "But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

So the Corinthian church was well equipped with spiritual gifts and graces. It also had a good attitude, had love—but Paul says, "Be sure you don't miss out on this other tremendously important grace, the grace of giving." And in this chapter which deals with giving, the word "grace" occurs seven times. It's the key word. So unless we understand grace and how grace motivates giving, we really can't understand God's plan for our money as revealed in the New Testament. You see, there are two things—law and grace. Now, law is external: it's written on tablets of stone; it's in front of your eyes; it says, "Do this," "Don't do that"; but it's not inside us. And something else inside us—the old nature, the rebel nature—resists what's written on the tablets outside. But grace is different. Grace is internal. It works from within, not from without. It's written on the heart, not on tablets of stone. And it's written there only by the Holy Spirit. No other agent can write the grace of God in our hearts but the Holy Spirit.

Now, we need to see how the New Testament contrasts law and grace. In John 1:17, it says this:

> "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

So grace comes only through Jesus Christ, the law came through Moses. But if we want grace, it's made available to us only through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it's made available only through the cross. It's only through the cross and what Jesus did on the cross that grace has been released and made available to the human race. This is true also in the area of finance, what Jesus did on the cross, made provision for our prosperity. This again is in that same chapter of 2 Corinthians 8:9, where Paul says:

> "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."

Notice, first of all, the key word there at the beginning "grace." It's not law, it's grace. We can't earn it. And the grace there is manifested in an exchange. Jesus was rich, but He became poor out of His grace; that we, in turn, through His grace, being poor, might become rich with His riches. Jesus exhausted the poverty curse of the broken law that in return, through grace, we might receive the wealth of the kingdom of God made available to us. So there's the essence of grace—it's through Jesus Christ and it's through the cross. The New Testament reveals also concerning grace, that grace is received only through faith. The very essence of grace is that it cannot be earned. There is nothing we can ever do that will deserve the grace of God. So Paul says this in Ephesians 2:8–9:

> "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Notice the order: by grace, through faith, not by works. I'm not speaking to you this week about a plan that you can earn for your money. I'm speaking about something that you can receive only by grace through faith. And then in Galatians 5:6, Paul says this:

> "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love."

So faith is the only way we can appropriate the grace of God and that faith that appropriates God's grace works by love. Now this is the spiritual key to right giving—I want to say it very clearly. Grace, received through Jesus and through the cross, by faith, that works through love. I'm going to say that once more. The spiritual key to right giving is grace (not law, but grace) received through Jesus and through the cross, by faith, and working by love. And I want to emphasize this: the Bible's principles of finance, as unfolded in the New Testament, can only be apprehended by faith. You must respond to this message with faith and faith means that we act, that we do something. Faith without actions is dead. What do we do? We give. We give before we have received. That's contrary to the thinking of the natural mind. The natural mind says, "I can't afford to give." Faith says, "You can't afford not to give because that's the key to receiving. Luke 6:38, listen to what Jesus says:

> "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will

> pour into your lap. For whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return."

What happens first? Do we receive, or do we give? The answer is: we give. "Give, and it will be given back." We give to God and God causes men to give back to us, that's God's control over the situation. And then Jesus brings out this second principle in that verse: "...whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return." If you want to receive generously, then Jesus says you have to give generously. Isn't that remarkable? In actual fact, you have the key to your financial prosperity. It's in your hands. It's the key of faith, responding to God's grace. And you can do two things: you can take the initiative, you can give, you don't have to wait, you can give. You can also set the proportion in which you wish to receive because the proportion in which you give determines the proportion in which you receive. So you do not have to sit there passively saying, "I wish or I hope," but you can begin to act in faith with you finance according to God's revealed plan in the New Testament and then your finances become God's responsibility.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be telling you about the very first thing we need to give to God.

Radio Program

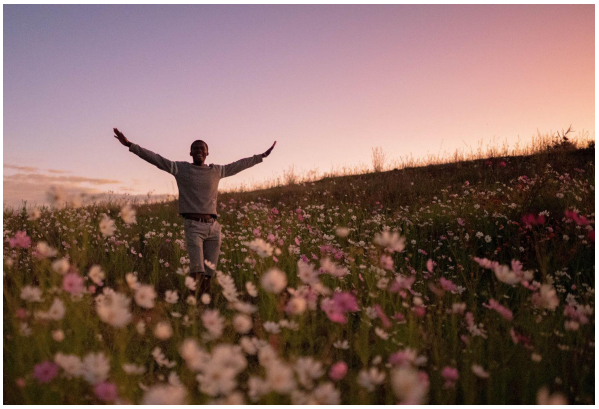
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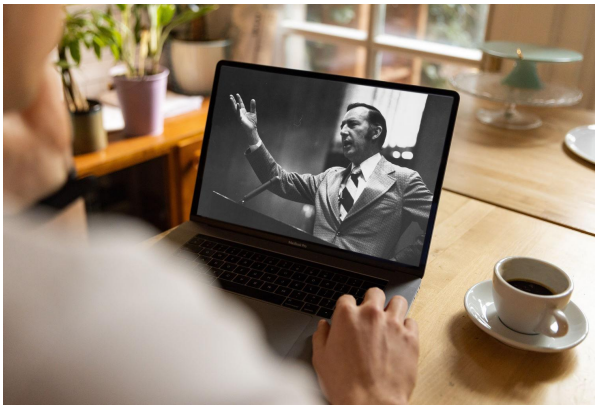
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