

First Give Yourself



God's Plan for Your Money (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life and can do the same in yours. This week I'm continuing with the theme that I commenced last week, "God's Plan for Your Money."

I've been sharing with you that God has a plan for every area of your life, including your money. The purpose of my talks is to help you find and apply God's plan in your life so that you may enjoy the benefit He has promised; that is, prosperity.

Yesterday I shared with you the spiritual key to right giving, which is grace, received through Jesus, through the cross, by faith and working through love. I pointed out there's a complete difference between the concept of law and grace. And when we speak about what to do with our finance, as Christians, from the New Testament, we are not speaking in terms of law but we're speaking in terms of grace. There's a total difference. You have to understand that. I'm going to say that again. The spiritual key to right giving is grace received through Jesus, through the cross, by faith, and working through love.

The Bible's principles of finance can only be apprehended by faith and faith means that we give first. Listen to these words of Jesus once more in Luke 6:38:

> "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."

And I pointed out from that verse that the initiative is with us—we don't have to sit around and wait for things to happen, we set things in motion by giving. We also determine the proportion in which we expect to receive by the proportion in which we give for Jesus says, "...whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return."

Now, today I'm going to tell you about the very first thing we need to give to God. We'll turn, again, to that giving chapter, 2 Corinthians 8. I suggest to you that you take time on your own to read that chapter and the following chapter through carefully, several times, to get the full impact of those two

chapters. There are thirty-nine verses in those two chapters together and the entire theme of both chapters is money. Whoever said the Bible doesn't have much to say about money?

All right. 2 Corinthians 8. Paul is writing here to the Corinthians about another group of churches, the Macedonian churches, and he's telling how the Holy Spirit moved on the Macedonian churches to be generous in their giving. And then he draws a lesson from that. 2 Corinthians 8:2–5:

Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy [that's the Macedonian churches] and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. [Never let it be said that the poor cannot afford to be generous.]

> "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints [their fellow believers. And now here comes the important part:] And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."

Notice that important sentence: "...they gave themselves first to the Lord..." What's the first thing we have to give to the Lord? Not our money, but ourselves. That's how it has to begin with each of us. Don't come and give your money to God if you haven't given yourself to God. You have to begin with yourself. You see, you cannot buy a good relationship with God. Actually, God can get on all right without your money. It's for your benefit that God requires you to give. But He has an order. As I said last week, "He doesn't want your tips!" He wants yourself and then out of the giving of yourself, by grace will naturally flow the kind of giving the New Testament talks about.

Let's go back to Romans 12:1–2, which is where I started last week and see this principle there.

> "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Again, I want to point out the key to finding God's will, and that includes God's will for your money, is offering yourself as a living sacrifice. Making yourself totally and unreservedly available to God for His service. When you do that, your mind is renewed by the Holy Spirit, you begin to think a different way. And as you begin to think a different way, then you can find God's will in its three successive phases: good, pleasing and perfect. As you find God's will, you'll discover that God's plan for your money is included in His will. God's plan for your life covers every area of your life, there's nothing that He hasn't made provision for and there's nothing that He doesn't accept responsibility for but you have to meet Him on His terms. Don't start by giving your money; start by giving yourself. Present yourself, your body, all that you are to the Lord as a living sacrifice on the altar of His service and then your mind will begin to grasp the fulness of God's provision and plan for you.

I've walked in this way for more than forty years and I want you to know that there are still many areas of God's perfect will for my life that I haven't fully entered into. But, as far as the area of finances is concerned, I can say that the principles I'm sharing with you I have applied in my own life and they work.

Once we have done as I've said—and that is giving ourselves to God—then the giving of our money (or whatever other gifts we may offer to God) completes and establishes our righteousness. It's very important to see that what you do with your money can establish you forever in God's righteousness. This is a remarkable statement in 2 Corinthians 9:9, Paul speaking about this quotes from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. He says:

> "As it is written: [and now he quotes:] 'He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.'"

Notice the order: the righteous man who's first given himself to God and then gives liberally to others—of him it is said: "His righteousness endures forever." His giving of his money establishes him forever in the righteousness of God.

I'd like to turn now to the Psalm from which Paul quoted and read some more of it because it really all centers around this theme. That's Psalm 112, I'm going to read 1, verses 3–6, and verse 9:

> "Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands [and that includes His

commands concerning money."

Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever [that's the theme of this passage in the Psalms: How to establish an enduring righteousness. Verse 4:]

> "Even in darkness light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. [So it doesn't say he won't go through darkness but it says that light will dawn in the darkness if he's gracious, compassionate and righteous—they all go together. The next verse emphasizes that.] Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. [The next verse:] Surely he will never be shaken; a righteous man will be remembered forever. [What's the key to this unshakeable righteousness? Handling your finances rightly, graciously, with compassion and generosity. Verse 9:] He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever… [That's the verse that Paul quotes in 2 Corinthians 9:9.]"

All through that Psalm, the theme is that right dealing with our finance establishes us forever in the righteousness of God. And I think the converse is also obviously true—if we don't handle our money rightly, we will never be established in the righteousness of God. So, the way we handle our money is really very, very decisive.

Let me give you a beautiful little teaching from Jesus to close this: Matthew 6:19–21:

> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

You see, right giving insures that God will provide for us in this world, but that's not the ultimate. The ultimate is that we're laying up treasure in heaven in proportion to what we give on earth. So our provision is on earth but our treasure is in heaven. And Jesus says very, very rightly and very soberly, "…where your treasure is, there you heart will be…" Where you invest is where your concern is. If you want to be more concerned for the kingdom of God, if you want to have a greater zeal for the things of God, I'll tell you one way to achieve that: invest more. The more you invest, the more concerned you will be. "Where your treasure is, your heart will be."

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing about giving as a two-way relationship. It's the proof of our love for God and also the cause of His special love for us.

Radio Program

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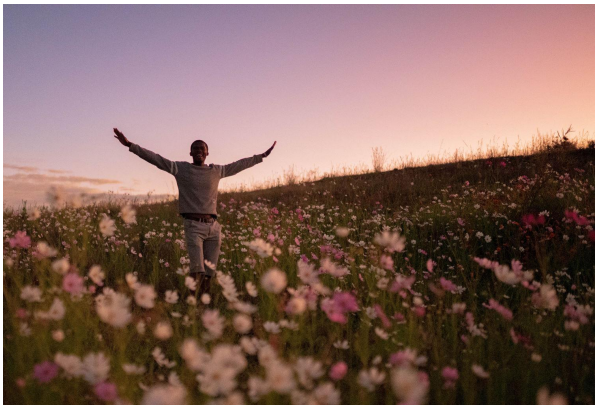

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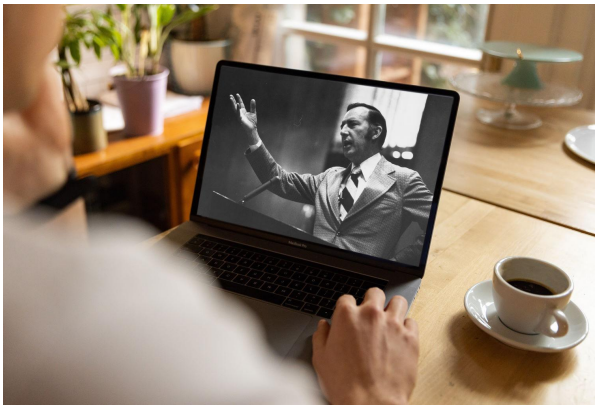

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