

A Two-Way Relationship



God's Plan for Your Money (Part 8)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again sharing on this week's important and practical theme, "God's Plan for Your Money." In my previous talks this week, I've been sharing that the key word in the Bible's teaching on giving is grace, not law and I've pointed out that there's only one route by which grace can come into our lives and operate in our lives. Grace comes only through Jesus. It comes only through the cross, through what Jesus did for us on the cross. It's received only by faith and that faith must work by love. This is so important I'm going to say it once more: Grace comes only through Jesus; it comes only through the cross; it's received only by faith and the faith that receives grace must work by love.

Then I went on and pointed out yesterday that when we talk about giving to God the first gift we need to give to God is ourselves. We cannot offer God anything that's acceptable until we've offered ourselves. However, once we have truly given ourselves to God, as Paul says in Romans 12, offered our bodies to Him as living sacrifices laid upon the altar of His service, then after that when we give in faith whatever we give completes and establishes our righteousness. Paul in this connection quotes Psalm 112 and he says about a certain righteous man, "He's scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever." In fact, that's the theme of Psalm 112, how generosity and compassion and right giving establish enduring righteousness that will never be done away with.

Today I want to speak about giving as a two-way relationship between God and the giver. First of all, we'll consider giving as a proof of our love for God and we'll turn back again to the grace of giving chapter, which is 2 Corinthians 8, and we'll read verses 7–8. Verse 7 we've already read before this week, but we'll follow on with verse 8.

> "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. [A complete Christian, or a complete Christian church must be able to excel in the grace of giving. And then Paul emphasizes it is not law but it is grace. He says:] I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity

> of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others."

And he's spoken to them about the generosity of the Macedonian Christians and he says, "Now I want to see if your love is really sincere and I'll find out by measuring what you give with what the Macedonian Christians gave." That's pretty plain talk, isn't it? And Paul really loved these Corinthian Christians. They were the fruit of his ministry. They were his spiritual children. But he said, "Now I want to find out whether your love for God is sincere or whether it's just talk. And the way I'll find out is by how much you give." And he said, "I've got a standard to compare with. Because the Macedonian Christians, out of their poverty, gave with amazing generosity. They've proved their love. Now," he said (in a certain sense), "the ball is in your court, you Corinthian Christians. How about you? How are you going to respond to this challenge to prove your love to God?"

And then, a little further on in that same chapter, 2 Corinthians 8:24, Paul says:

> "Therefore show these men [that's the representative of the churches who'd come—show these men] the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it."

Some people's giving is so secret that nobody ever knows anything about it and I wonder if it isn't because they'd be embarrassed if anybody did know. But Paul says in this matter of giving to God, he says, "We don't have to do it in secret." He said, "Do it in front of everybody. Let everybody see your commitment to the Lord. We've seen it with the Macedonian churches. Now," he said, "I want to see it with you. I've boasted about you, I'm proud of you, you're my children but it's very, very important to me that you prove your love in this vital matter of giving."

Also our giving not only proves our love for God but it proves our love for our fellow-believers. This is very plainly stated by the apostle John, 1 John 3:16–20:

> "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. [That's the proof of the love of God.] And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. [We ought to do to others as Jesus did for us. What does John mean by 'laying down our lives for our brothers? What does he have in mind? He goes on in verse 17:] If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has not pity on him how can the love of God be in him?'"

Laying down our lives for our brothers includes helping them with our material possessions if they are in need and we are in a position to do it. And then he goes on and John really loved the people he was writing to. He says:

> "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

There's a saying in our contemporary culture which I think is pretty good: "Put your money where your mouth is." That's exactly what John is saying. He said, "You've said it, now do it! Don't love just with words and in tongue, but with actions and in truth." And then he goes on with an amazing statement:

> "This then [in other words, loving in action, with our finances—this then] is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything."

So, if we're feeling condemned, if we're feeling "I wonder whether I'm really accepted with God," he says this is how we set our hearts at rest—it's by our generosity. It's exactly what Paul was saying when he was quoting Psalm 112, "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor, his righteousness endures forever." So you see, we have two alternatives when it comes to love. One is just in words and in tongue; the other is in actions and in truth. And one of the ways that we'll answer that challenge is by what we do with our finance. We'll prove by that whether it's just in word or in tongue or whether it's in action and in truth.

I said at the beginning of this talk that giving to God is a two-way relationship. The first relationship is our attitude to God, we prove our love for God by giving to Him. But the second aspect of the relationship is God's response to us and the New Testament teaches that right giving is a cause of God's special love for us. God loved the world, but He loves some people specially and one class of people He loves are those who give generously and happily. 2 Corinthians 9:7:

> "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, [again, it is not law, it is grace. And then Paul adds this:] for God loves a cheerful giver."

You want to be loved of God? That's one way: Give cheerfully. God loves a cheerful giver. The Greek word that's translated

“cheerful” is the word from which we get, in English, “hilarious.” “God loves a hilarious giver.” Have you ever thought of giving with hilarity?

I spent five years in East Africa and I can remember scenes in African churches where the people gave with hilarity. And believe me, by our standards in America, all of them were extremely poor. And they did not mostly have money but they would give in kind: coffee beans, corn cobs, eggs, maybe chickens. And I can remember seeing these African women, because they always carried everything on their head, walking up to the front of the church with a couple of corn cobs balanced on top of their head (you’d hardly believe they could do it) or even a live chicken! Put it down at the altar, go back, and then get touched by God again and coming running up with another gift. And I don’t think I’ve ever seen simple people more happy than those people. They were hilarious givers.

Why should people be hilarious when they give? Let me give you three reasons. First of all, it’s the supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit. Remember, it’s grace, it’s not law. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace. When we line ourselves up with what God wants and what the Holy Spirit can bless, then He comes upon us with real supernatural grace and people get happy in a way they can’t be happy just in the natural. Secondly, it calls down God’s favor on us. And the Bible says God’s favor is like a shield and it’s like a cloud of the latter rain. It precipitates His blessing upon us. And thirdly, and very important, hilarious giving releases us from slavery to mammon. Mammon is that evil, Satanic power that enslaves men and women through money. But when we begin to give hilariously, we’re saying to mammon, “Away with you. You’re not going to dictate to me. You’re not going to dominate my thinking. I’m going to give with joy because I’m giving to God and God loves a cheerful giver.”

Well, our time is up for today. I’ll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I’ll be sharing with you another aspect of giving: giving as sowing.

Radio Program

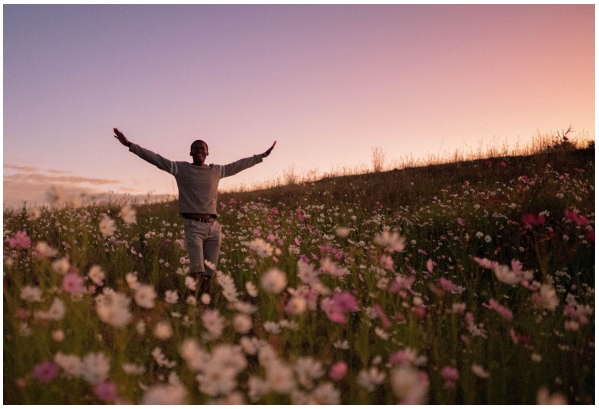
Transcript: TS-R118-103-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



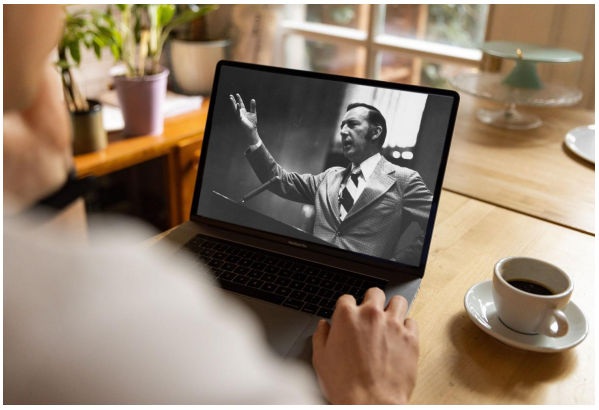
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries